BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Dissertation

THE SECULAR AS A THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM
A Study in the Theologies of Karl Heim, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Friedrich Gogarten

by

James Cecil Logan

(A.B., Florida Southern College, 1953; S.T.B., Boston
University School of Theology, 1956)

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

1966

APPROVED

by

First Reader Nils Ehrenstrom
Professor of Ecumenics

Second Reader J Robert Nelson
Professor of Systematic Theology

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The Problem of the Dissertation 1
- B. Definitions 2
- C. Previous Research in the Field 2
- D. The Method of the Dissertation 4

II. THE IDEA OF THE SECULAR

- A. Biblical Background 10
  - 1. Αἰών 10
  - 2. Κτίσις and Κόσμος 12
- B. Graeco-Roman Background 24
- C. The Place of the Secular in Pre-Reformation Theology 30
  - 1. The Dilemma in the Earliest Community 30
  - 2. Monastic Movement *versus* Secular Laity 35
  - 3. Augustine's "Two Cities" 40
  - 4. Francis of Assisi and the Discovery of the Natural 50
  - 5. Thomas Aquinas: Nature and Grace 54
- D. The "Secular" in Protestant Theology 70
  - 1. Martin Luther: The Two Realms 71
    - a) *Peccator et justus* 75
    - b) *Regnum diaboli* 78
    - c) *Regnum Christi* 80
    - d) *Vocatio* 82

Chapter Page

2. Calvin: Evangelical Humanism. 90
   - a) Knowledge of God and Knowledge of Man. . . 91
   - b) Man as Fallen. 94
   - c) The "True Man" 95
   - d) The Law. 97
   - e) The Church in the World. 99
   - f) The Christian's Calling. 100
3. Philip Jacob Spener: The Rise of Pietism. . . 103
4. Friedrich Schleiermacher: A Theology of Culture. 109
   - a) Feeling. 110
   - b) Religion 114
   - c) Piety and Culture. 117
5. A Historical Summary 122
   - a) Pre-Constantinian Christianity 123
   - b) The Constantinian Period 124
   - c) The Protestant Reformation 126
6. The Twentieth Century Situation. 130
   - a) The Political Crisis 131
   - b) The Crisis in the Sciences 134
   - c) The Existential Crisis 136
   - d) The Theological Crisis 140
   - e) The Secular Crisis 143
7. The Theological Mandate. 148

III. KARL HEIM: AND THE QUESTION OF THE SECULAR: SECULARISM DISPLACED

A. Historical Background 154

B. The Apologetic Method 156

Chapter Page

1. Phenomenological Analysis. 156
    a) The Death of the Pre-Copernican World. . . 159
    b) The Substitutes Offered by Newtonian Physics. 161
    c) Consequences for Apologetics 169
2. The Ultimate Either/Or 174

C. Toward a Christian Weltanschauung. 176
1. The Case for Intramundane Transcendence. . . . 177
    a) Nonobjective Relations 178
    b) Contents and Dimensions. 183
    c) The World of Polarity. 187
2. The Case for Supramundane Transcendence. . . . 190
    a) Creator and Lord 191
    b) Nonobjective Transcendence 192
    c) The Reality of Faith 197
3. A Critical Response. 199

IV. DIETRICH BONHOEFFER AND THE QUESTION OF THE SECULAR: SECULAR MATURITY

A. The Church, Christ and the World in the Early Writings of Bonhoeffer 213
1. *The Communion of Saints*. 214
2. *Act and Being*. 220
3. *Christologie* 223
4. *Thy Kingdom Come* 226

B. The Natural in Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* 230
1. Toward Defining the Natural. 234
2. The "Ultimate" and the "Penultimate" 238

Chapter Page

3. Bonhoeffer's Critique of Other Approaches. . . 242

4. A Final Definition of the Natural. 255

C. The "Secular" in the Prison Papers. 260

1. „Die mündige Welt" 266

2. „Das Ende der christlichen Religion" 270

3. „Die nicht-religiöse Interpretation biblischer Begriffe" 279

4. „Heilige Weltlichkeit" 288

D. A Critical Reflection 292

V. FRIEDRICH GOGARTEN AND THE QUESTION OF THE SECULAR: SECULAR FAITH

A. The Word as History 311

1. The Meaning of the Word. 312

2. The Word of God and Existence. 315

B. Creation as History 318

1. The Twofold Nature of Belief in Creation . . . 320

2. Creation as Temporal 322

3. Faith as History 325

C. Faith as a New Historical Understanding 328

1. Faith as Freedom from the World. 330

2. The Threefold Aspect of Freedom. 332

3. The World as an Inheritance. 335

4. Freedom from the Law 337

D. The Secularization of the World 342

1. The Christian Origin of Secularization 344

2. Sonship and Forfeited Sonship. 346

3. Secularization and Faith 350

Chapter Page

E. A Critical Reflection. 353

VI. TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF THE SECULAR

A. A Critical Summary 367

B. The Relevance of a Heilsplan for a Theology of the Secular. 370

C. A Theological Schema 381

1. Creation: A Theology of the World 382

a) Christ the New Creation. 383

b) The World as Creation. 388

c) Man as Created Responsibility. 391

2. Christ: A Theology of Lordship. 394

a) The Secular Meaning of Christ. 395

b) Christ the Lord of Man 401

c) Christ the Lord of the World 406

3. Church: A Theology of Servanthood 413

a) The Church as the Body of Christ 414

b) The Church in the World. 422

c) The Church: Secular and Secularized 429

4. Consummation: A Theology of Glory 432

a) The Meaning of Consummation. 434

b) The Consummation in the Light of Christ. . . 436

c) The Secular Meaning of Consummation. 438

BIBLIOGRAPHY. 440

ABSTRACT 466

AUTOBIOGRAPHY 469

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem of the Dissertation

The problem of this dissertation is to examine critically the theological work of three twentieth century theologians whose major efforts were directed towards explaining the relationship of Christian theology with the secular stance of modern man. These three German Lutheran theologians are Karl Heim, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Friedrich Gogarten. As background for this particular theological enterprise in the twentieth century a historical study of the concept of the "secular" or the "world" in Christian thought precedes the exposition of the theologians selected for this study. The historical survey focuses upon selected movements and figures principally in western Christian thought. This survey is advisable since certain theological problems such as nature and grace, law and gospel come into new focus in the twentieth century attempts to reckon theologically with the phenomenon of secularization. Such a survey necessitates a somewhat longer than usual introductory content chapter.

As an attempt to develop a critical norm for both the historical study and the exposition of the three twentieth century figures, a biblical word study of "time," "creation," and "world" is preliminary to the historical survey. On the basis of this word study it is seen that the category of the "secular" or the "world" is integrally related with the biblical concepts of time and history. It is therefore the conviction of this dissertation that the reality of the "secular" or the "world" can be held within Christian theology only by a careful reckoning with the biblical concept of time and, hence, the biblical Heilsgeschichte. The final chapter of the dissertation is an attempt to show the constructive results for theology of the employment of the Heilsgeschichte motif as a proper Grundlage for a "theology of the secular."

B. Definitions

The term "secular" is used in this dissertation to designate man's relationship with his world in the process of civilization-building. In this sense it is a descriptive, neutral term. The terms "secularization" and "secularity" are derivative terms and are used in the same descriptive manner. On the other hand "secularism" is to be understood as the process in which man treats his worldly environment in an autonomous fashion as an end in itself. The dissertation always presupposes a critical distinction between these two terms.

C. Previous Research in the Field

Until recently the major research in the problem of this dissertation had been done by German theologians. The American scene, however, is fast becoming alive to the problem and several significant American works have been produced within the past two years. Of major assistance in this study was the work of H. Richard Niebuhr in his analysis of the five typological classifications of the relation between Christ and culture.[1] For the study of the process of secularization the investigations of Friedrich Delekat,[2] Oskar Hammelsbeck,[3] B. Rietveld,[4] Friedrich Karl Schumann,[5] Martin Stallmann,[6] and the collected papers of the consultation for university teachers sponsored by the World Council of Churches at Bossey, Switzerland, in 1959.[7] The opening essay by Charles West in this compilation has become pivotal in terms of definitional statements regarding the "secular."

Important works which are less analytical but responsive to the analytical work of delineating the process of secularization are to be found on the German scene by Wilhelm Kamlah,[8] Erich Müller-Gangloff,[9] Horst Symanowski,[10] and Helmut Thielicke.[11] On the British scene, while from different perspectives, the work of Ronald Gregor-Smith,[12]

---

1. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951).
2. Friedrich Delekat, *Über den Begriff der Säkularisation* (Heidelberg: Quelle and Meyer, 1958).
3. O. Hammelsbeck, *Die veränderte Weltsituation des modernen Menschen als religiöses Problem* (München: Kaiser Verlag, 1955).
4. B. Rietveld, *Saecularisatie als Probleem der theologische Ethiek* (Gravenhage, Holland: Uitgeverig van Keulen N.V., 1957).
5. Friedrich Karl Schumann, *Der Gottesgedanke und der Zerfall der Moderne* (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr, 1929).
6. Martin Stallmann, *Was Ist Säkularisierung*? (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1960).
7. Charles West, ed., *The Idea of the Secular* (Bossey: mimeographed report of the consultation for university teachers, 1959).
8. Wilhelm Kamlah, *Der Mensch in der Profanität* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1959).
9. Erich Müller-Gangloff, *Horizonte der nachmodernen Welt* (Stuttgart: Verlagsgemeinschft Burckhardthaus- und Kreuz-Verlag Gehnhausen, 1962).
10. Horst Symanowski, *Gegen die Weltfremdkeit* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1960).
11. Helmut Thielicke, *Nihilism: Its Origin and Nature*, trans. John Doberstein (New York: Harper and Row, 1961).
12. Ronald Gregor-Smith, *The New Man: Christianity and Man's Coming of Age* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956).

Ian Henderson,[1] and D. L. Munby,[2] are very resourceful responses. The American scene has produced recently works by Albert Mollegen,[3] Gabriel Vahanian,[4] Paul van Buren,[5] and Harvey Cox.[6]

D. The Method of the Dissertation

The problem of the dissertation is developed in three stages. Chapter II is concerned with a historical survey and critical treatment of the idea of the "secular" or the "world" in the history of Christian thought. This historical survey is preceded by a biblical *excursus*. The third, fourth and fifth chapters of the dissertation are concerned with critical expositions of the thought of Karl Heim, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Friedrich Gogarten. The final chapter is an attempt to correlate the insights gained from the historical and expository exercises with a *Heilsgeschichte* approach to a "theology of the secular."

---

[1] Ian Henderson, *Can Two Walk Together? The Quest for a Secular Morality* (London: Nisbet and Company, Ltd., 1948).

[2] D. L. Munby, *The Idea of a Secular Society and Its Significance for Christians* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

[3] Albert Mollegen, *Christianity and Modern Man: The Crisis of Secularism* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1961).

[4] Gabriel Vahanian, *The Death of God* (New York: Braziller, 1962).

[5] Paul van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963).

[6] Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965).

CHAPTER II

THE IDEA OF THE SECULAR

The cry of the Psalmist, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?"[1] has expressed a passionate concern of Christian theology throughout its history. From the beginning a tension has existed between the proclamation of salvation and the world to which the Word is spoken. Depending upon the time, Christian thought has sought to heighten the tension, as in the case with Tertullian, or to obscure the tension, as in the case of certain forms of nineteenth century thought. The crisis of "the Lord's song in a foreign land" has given birth to various forms of Christian apologetics. The mid-twentieth century faces this same question with acuteness because of the shattering disillusions attendant on the two great world wars, the tendency towards human autonomy resulting from the advances of the natural sciences and the developments in social and political theory, and, not the least, the thorough-going attack upon the battlements of Christian apologetics mustered by the advent of dialectical theology under the aegis of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner. The result is that the Psalmist's question is heard with particular force again.

Professor H. A. Hodges speaks of this situation:

---

[1] Psalms 134:4.

> In a world like this it is inevitable that religion should not be at the hub of things. It survives, and is often able to make some sort of show of influence, but it is an influence which cannot operate on the levels where the really determinative decisions are made. The Church lives on as an institution, venerable for its antiquity, woven into the habits of the people, and continuing to function by the sheer inertia of tradition. Among its members, and among a large section of the outside public, it maintains by its very existence the habit of certain emotional attitudes and the profession of certain standards which are sometimes revered as embodying an ideal which we recognize but cannot reach, and sometimes jeered at as a dream which cannot come to terms with the facts of life. There is also the social function of the Church as a club, sometimes exploited and used as an advertisement by the Church itself. In short, the Church survives partly by habit and partly because it serves purposes extrinsic to its own essence.[1]

Picturesquely, Karl Heim makes the same point when he ponders seriously whether the Christian faith is not in essentially the same condition as that of the popular religions of Greece four centuries after Plato. He compares the Church to a sinking ship:

> The Church is like a ship on whose deck festivities are still kept up and glorious music is heard, while deep below the waterline a leak has been sprung and masses of water are pouring in so that the vessel is settling hourly lower though the pumps are manned day and night.[2]

The whole contemporary cultural climate has been affected by a secularistic attitude which creates a situation unparalleled in the history of the church's evangelistic and theological enterprise. The term used most frequently to describe the accentuated form of this

---

1. H. A. Hodges, Christianity and the Modern World View (London: S. P. C. K., 1962, second edition), p. 2.
2. Karl Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, trans. N. H. Smith (London: S. C. M. Press Ltd., 1953), p. 24.

cultural phenomenon is "nihilism." Helmut Thielicke refers to this as "the absolutization of nothingness."[1] This phenomenon is not merely a mental abstraction but is closely allied with the advanced stages of the so-called technological society. Gabriel Marcel, the French Catholic philosopher writes: "Nothingness or mere negation is, as it were, the secret which technocracy jealously hides in its heart."[2] European culture has known this phenomenon since the post-first-world-war years; it is a more recent arrival on the American scene. There are indications that it is increasingly a factor to be reckoned with in Oriental society. Its growth seems rapid and all-pervasive:

> I know of no party, no church, no institution that can at present be considered uncontaminated by this terrible scourge. Nihilism is making a pretense of a creed in which one does not believe; it is the smoke of an incense before an empty shrine; it is the exaltation of self-sacrifice and heroism as ends in themselves; it is liberty that is not in the service of life; liberty that has to have recourse to suicide or crime in order to prove itself. It is the subordination of truth and justice to selfish utility; it is the primacy of tactics and cunning in every form of collective relationship.[3]

Mid-twentieth century Christian theology finds itself speaking to the world of a faith which is no longer "at the hub of things," speaking from the context of a Church which is strangely like a "sinking ship," and speaking to a modern man whose real creed is "nothingness."

---

1. Helmut Thielicke, Nihilism, trans. John Doberstein (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961).
2. Gabriel Marcel, Man Against Mass Society (Chicago: Regnery, 1962), p. 261.
3. Ignazio Silone, "On the Place of the Intellectual and the Pretensions of the Intellectual," in George B. de Huszar, ed., The Intellectuals (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960), p. 265.

Can Christian theology take hold of the category of the "world" and speak meaningfully of this reality of man's natural or secular relationships in such a way that the world once again can be seen in a sacramental relationship with its Creator? The Psalmist's question cannot be quieted, though the question may be phrased differently in a new cultural situation. Should Christian theology speak as if the question of modern man and his secular involvement could matter less? Should Christian theology enter into a new warfare between belief and unbelief? Can Christian theology recover the category of the "world as world" and speak of it from a Christian center with redemptive meaning? These are questions both of proper theological method and appropriate theological content. Here is the focus of this investigation.

Is there a legitimate place within the _corpus_ of Christian dogma for the reality of the "world" as the sphere of man's human achievements? Or, does Christian thought view the "religious man" as distinctively set apart from "secular man"? In short, does the secular stand _apart from_ or does it have a fundamental grounding _within_ the scope of a Christian _Lebensanchauung_?

The fact that a tension has existed and continues to exist between what is viewed as essentially two realms -- the sacred and the secular -- was clearly depicted when H. Richard Niebuhr constructed what is now the classic typology dealing with these two realms. Niebuhr saw the tension historically expressed in five directions: Christ _against_ culture, the Christ _of_ culture, Christ _above_ culture, Christ in paradoxical relation with culture, and Christ transforming culture.[1] The proper relationship was so perplexing that Niebuhr termed this "the enduring problem."[2] Niebuhr's carefully constructed typology has been of inestimable value in all discussions of this problem since it was published in 1951. The various types of relationship between the realms of secular and sacred were tested and astutely criticized from Niebuhr's own preference for a so-called Augustinian "transformationist" position. Niebuhr was the first to recognize the tentative and relative nature of his critical conclusions:

> . . . it must be evident that neither extension nor refinement of study could bring us to the conclusive result that would enable us to say, "This is the Christian answer." . . . one is stopped at one point or another from making the attempt to give a final answer, not only by the evident paucity of one's historical knowledge, as compared with other historical men, and the evident weakness of one's ability in conceptual construction as compared with other thinkers, but by the conviction, the knowledge, that the giving of such an answer by any finite mind, to which any measure of limited and little faith has been granted, would be an act of usurpation of the Lordship of Christ which at the same time would involve doing violence to the liberty of Christian men and to the unconcluded history of the church in culture.[3]

The historical excursus which follows is a continuation of the process of exploration into Niebuhr's "enduring problem." The attempt here is not to view one "type" from the heights of another "type," but in the following excursus the attempt is made to get back to more

---

1. H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951).
2. Ibid., pp. 1-11.
3. Ibid., pp. 231-233.

fundamental ground. This "fundamental ground" is to be found within the biblical perspective itself. Within the Judeo-Christian scriptures, what is the attitude towards man's human achievements, his autonomous activity, his civilization-building? Within biblical faith and history what is the perspective on the "world" and the "secular"? To move to this more "fundamental ground" may supply for the discussion a more suitable and at the same time flexible norm for the judgment of the development of Christian focus on this "enduring problem."

A. Biblical Background

The crucial biblical categories for an investigation of the theological placement of the "secular" are *time*, *world* and *creation*. The concern here is not with cosmology, but with those meanings which deal with the world and age in the context of humanity in its temporal existence. Within the Old and New Testaments there is a general overlapping or interpenetration of these terms, but the significance of this interpenetration can be seen only when the terms have been examined separately.

1. Αἰών

The use of the word αἰών in the New Testament corresponds to the Old Testament concept of *ōlām*. As a "time definition" αἰών in the New Testament is employed ambiguously as is its counterpart in the Hebrew *ʿōlām* or *zruam*.[1] This word designates both a specific, limited time interval and a period of undefined duration or boundlessness. In the latter sense it can be understood as "eternity."[1] This serves to illustrate that the Hebrew and early Christian mind did not place time and eternity in antithesis. The same word can speak of "limited time" and of "boundless time." Eternity was not "timelessness" as in Greek philosophical thought.[2] Eternity in the biblical sense meant the ongoing of time. As Cullmann points out, the correct distinction which the New Testament makes is between limited time and unlimited time.[3] The αἰών as limited time is that time between creation and the eschatological consummation. Theologically speaking, the New Testament language about "this age" (limited time) is preludial to "the new age" (unlimited time) which is the *eschaton*. Therefore, when the New Testament speaks of this "evil age," it draws the picture of a warfare between the two ages.[4] Yet this does not depreciate "this age." It is not "age" itself which is evil, i.e., time was not created by the act of man's fall. That which is evil is the historical content of the "age." Actually, the powers of evil occupy this "age."

---

[1] Hermann Sasse, Αἰών, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Band I (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934), 198.

This New Testament word assumes additional significance for this study when it is seen that etymologically αἰών goes back to the root *aivo* (cf. Latin *aevum*, Sanskrit *āyu*), which means "life" or "life force" or "lifetime."[5] In other words, αἰών refers not to an

---

1. Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, trans. Floyd Filson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950), p. 45.
2. Thorlief Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek*, trans. Jules Moreau (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 151-154.
3. Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
4. E.G., Galatians, 1:4.
5. C. Lackeit, *Aion. Zeit und Ewigkeit in Sprache und Religion des Griechen*, I (Leipzig: T. G. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1916), 7ff.

impersonal "age" but to human life lived as subject to a limited time.

From this point αἰών develops a new meaning in the New Testament where it stands for "world epoch."[1] Evidences of this development can be seen in Matthew 13:39-40 (συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος), and, while the singular form changes to the plural, the same meaning is to be found in I Corinthians 10:11 and Hebrews 9:26. It is not difficult, then, to see how αἰών approaches the New Testament concept of κόσμος in such instances as Mark 4:19; I Corinthians 2:6, and Titus 2:12. The background of this development can be traced back into the first century B.C., where in Jewish apocalyptic literature the doctrine of the two aeons emerges in a crossing of the temporal and spatial categories. The point needs to be stressed, however, that simply because the imagery of warfare is employed in apocalyptic thought a strict negative evaluation of the historical age is not implied. The new aeon has a definite continuity with the old in that the same linear time (in this case, endless time) is moving teleologically toward the eschaton.

2. Κτίσις and Κόσμος

In the New Testament three Greek words, οἰκουμένη, αἰών and κόσμος are translated as "world." This investigation is concerned with the latter two and a certain overlapping of the two. Likewise, a certain affinity exists in the New Testament between κόσμος and κτισις For the sake of systematic clarity it would be well to begin with the understanding of the κτίσις as God's creation.[1]

---

[1] Ernst Jenni, "Time," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, ed. George Butterick, R-Z (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 645.

[2] See J. W. Bowman, "Eschatology of the New Testament," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, E-J, 135-140.

In the Genesis accounts of creation divine order is the chief category of description. This stands in contrast, however, to the Platonic concept of κόσμος where the world is harmoniously integrated on the basis of reason. In the Genesis account "the order is God's; it is not 'natural'."[2] Each creature in the Genesis account is under a divine decree to fulfill the intention of the Creator.[3] The views of the Hebrew writers about creation are, in this sense, anthropocentric. Man stands at the center of the whole picture, and the rest of the animate and inanimate world is seen as a kind of backdrop for the drama of human history. What modern man calls "nature" derives its significance from the activity within it of mankind and, in particular, of the chosen people of God.

When the Creator views the world and beholds its conformity with His intention, He passes His judgment, "Behold, it is good."[4] Such a doctrine repudiates all Gnostic heretical tendencies of New Testament times to view the creation as standing in antithetical enmity with a divine realm.[5] It is a fundamental tenet of Hebrew faith that the created order is not to be depreciated, but rather a positive view of man and his relations with his world is held forth. Asceticism is foreign to the main stream of Old Testament thought, and the rejection of asceticism rests upon this positive evaluation of God's act in creation.

---

[1] For specific references see Mark 10:6; 13:19; Romans 1:20; II Peter 3:9; and Revelation 3:14.

[2] G. W. H. Lampe, "The New Testament Doctrine of KTISIS," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, XVII, No. 4 (1964), 451.

[3] G. E. Wright, "Creation," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, A-D, 729.

[4] Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31.

[5] Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, trans. John H. Marks (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 47.

In the creation accounts man is set over the created order by divine decree. Man is the administrator of God's creation.[1] This position of man makes him "a little lower than the angels." In the days of Psalm 8 and Genesis 1 man's control over his environment was feeble indeed; yet the Hebrew poet and priestly writer could believe that all things had been put in subjection under his feet: an idea which was only to begin to come true after the emergence of the industrial and technical societies of the modern world. The role of man is that of an intermediary through whom the divine will is to be expressed for all lower creatures and even the inanimate world.

Certain sections of the New Testament underscore this positive evaluation of creation by offering a type of Christological interpretation. The created universe is still seen in the New Testament, as in the Old Testament, as the setting for God's dealing with man. The unity and integrity of the created order is not to be found in a rational principle but in God's purpose "which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."[2] The early Church confessed that the salvation of the world was predestined in Christ before the foundation

---

1. See von Rad, op. cit., p. 57, where he argues: "There is less said about the gift itself than about the task. . . This commission to rule is not considered as belonging to the definition of God's image; but it is its consequence, i.e., that for which man is capable because of it."
2. Ephesians 1:9-10.

of the world.[1] It is not by accident that the fourth Gospel begins with the same formula as Genesis 1, "In the beginning. . ." As Paul had stated earlier, there is one God "from whom are all things and for whom we exist," even as there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, "through whom are all things and through whom we exist,"[2] so the fourth Gospel affirms that the world from beginning (creation) to end (consummation) is under the sovereign sway of God whose purpose is revealed in Jesus Christ.[3] The consummation or _eschaton_ involves all of God's world, but it does so because a transformed world is included in the realization of God's creative and redemptive purpose for his people. This purpose is not only consummated in Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ is the very incarnation of the purpose which was with God from the beginning. In this manner the New Testament reaffirms in Christological context ancient Israel's conviction of the goodness of God's creation. Through God in Christ, the world can be seen as God's world and is thereby to be enjoyed and received with thanksgiving (I Timothy 4:3). In the resurrection of Christ is to be seen the fact that Christ is the Lord of the whole creation. His Lordship is a Lordship over the original creation in that he is the embodiment of God's Word and Wisdom. This, the New Testament summarizes by the phrase "alpha and omega." He is identified with God's original creative Word in John's prologue and with God's wisdom as depicted in Proverbs 8:22. In short, he is "the beginning of God's creation" (Revelation 3:14). No more is the new creation discontinuous with the old than is the new aeon discontinuous with the old.

---

[1] Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:4; I Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8; 17:8.

[2] I Corinthians 8:6.

[3] See C. H. Dodd, _The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel_ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).

The New Testament combines with this reflexive Christological perspective on the original creation a prospective, futuristic dimension. The Kingdom of God has been inaugurated with the event of Jesus Christ in time, in the created order, in this world, and this is described as the "new creation" of which Deutero-Isaiah had spoken. As the words of the author of the "Suffering Servant" passages were a promise of a new time to come, so the "new creation" in Christ is a foretaste of the eschatological end time.[1] While the Christian's life is viewed as an existence "between the times,"[2] the redemptive activity of God through Christ proceeds in the manner in which God had acted in the original creation.[3]

The "new creation," however, appears in a world which is in "darkness."[4] This does not mean that the "power of darkness" is innately a part of the world of God's creation. The Pauline and Johannine materials frequently employ κόσμος to mean the actual involvements of man's dominion over the created order.[5] So seriously perverted is man's relationship with those things under him that even the whole creation "groans in travail."[6] But the fact that in the center of time, within the created order God has acted redemptively in

---

1. Revelation 21:1-4.
2. Cullmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-230.
3. Romans 4:17.
4. John 1:5, 10; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35-36; I John 1:5-6; 2:8-9,11.
5. John 12:31; 16:11; I Corinthians 1:21; Galatians 4:9; I John 5:19.
6. Romans 8:19-25.

Jesus Christ thwarts any pessimistic interpretation of the course of time. This central act of God promises a full consummation of creation involving both man and the creation subject to him. Because Jesus Christ, the New Man,[1] evidences the restoration of the divine intention in the original creation, the man of faith can stand in the created order in a new freedom, no longer slave to the "elemental powers of the universe," free to be a mature son of God.[2]

As the original creation merited the divine approval of goodness, the restored creation receives the divine blessing of ἀγάπη . The κόσμος which was at enmity with God is the very κόσμος which God "so loved . . . that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."[3] It is a "reconciled" κόσμος .[4] Biblically speaking, the κόσμος is therefore no longer simply κόσμος . It is the "new age" (αἰών), wherein "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."[5]

A question still persists. What, then, of the so-called biblical injunctions for "world-denial"? It is precisely the fact of the "new age" inaugurated in Christ which saves Christianity from what is commonly called "world-denial" or asceticism. When this fact is lost sight of, theology has no alternative but to fall back into a type of exclusively futuristic apocalypticism, "where the absolutized hope floats in the air and is not anchored in faith in what has already been fulfilled . . ."[1] Such a position merits fully the denunciation of Oscar Cullmann: "This is not the eschatology of redemptive history, but rather eschatological fever."[2] The fact that the κόσμοφ has been redeemed frees theology from this ethical blunder.

---

[1] Romans 5:22-24; cf. I. Corinthians 15:21-22.

[2] Galatians 4:3.

[3] John 3:16.

[4] II Corinthians 5:19.

[5] Revelation 11:15.

On the other hand, it can hardly be claimed that the alternative is an unqualified "world-affirmation." Theology is saved from this alternative by the scriptural emphasis referred to above concerning the Christian's existence "between the times." While the Christian experiences the "new creation," he knows that this is not identical with the consummation of history. To adopt an "autonomous world-affirmation" is to fall back into "darkness" and become a slave to the "elemental powers of the universe." The Christian lives in the "interim," though it must be said that the "interim" is here far differently viewed from Albert Schweitzer's picture of it.[3] For in this sense, contrary to Schweitzer, the "interim" still has positive value regardless of the age or time. The "interim" is the time of the church.

The ethical position of the Christian in the world "between the times" is aptly expressed by Cullmann:

> The believer lives in a world concerning which he knows that it will pass away, but he knows that it still has its divinely willed place in the framework of redemptive history and is ruled by Christ. In so far as he knows that it will pass away, he denies it; in so far as he knows that it is the divinely willed framework of the present stage of redemptive history, he affirms it.[4]

---

[1] Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 211.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 212.
[3] See Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, trans. W. Montgomery (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), pp. 402-403.
[4] Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

From this biblical exploration of terminology several significant conclusions can be drawn relevant to a theological study of the category of the "secular."

a) The biblical concept of time moves in a linear direction from creation to Christ to consummation. In the light of this understanding of time the overlapping of αἰών and κόσμος in New Testament usage can be explained. Because time is reckoned in terms of events and events are historical, αἰών and κόσμος can in certain contexts be identified because they are employed as essentially historical terms. To be in this world is at the same time to be in "this age." On the other hand, to be "in Christ" is to be in the "new age."[1] The source of this linear concept of history is found in the Hebrews' experience with God who acted to call them out of bondage in Egypt and make a covenant with them. The God who had thus acted was ultimately in control of history viewed as a unity, and though Israel's infidelity to the covenant might obstruct his redemptive purpose, in the end his purpose would be fulfilled in his Kingdom. This history can best be viewed under the figure of "an upward sloping line,"[1] to indicate that the entire process has movement and direction and that its terminus is the accomplishment of the purpose of God.

---

[1] Linguistic studies have been used to bolster this linear concept of time. Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 49, writes, "This schematic survey (of the New Testament terminology: KAIROS, AION, CHRONOS) shows that only this simple rectilinear conception of unending time can be considered as the framework for the New Testament history of redemption. Along this consistently rectilinear line of the ages lie the KAIROI determined by God." The approach to such a *Heilsgeschichte* via the path of such a word study has been questioned more recently by James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961). Cullmann himself recognizes, theoretically at least, this danger. He writes, "To be sure, theological understanding necessarily encounters limits in the separate treatment of a single word." Cullmann, *op. cit.*, 38. Other critics have objected that such a *Heilsplan* is more of a philosophical construction than a faithful exegesis. This seems to be the essence of Bultmann's critique of Cullmann's *Heilsgeschichte*. See Bultmann, "History of Salvation and History," in *Existence and Faith*, Schubert Ogden, ed. and trans. (New York: Meridian Books, Inc. 1960), pp. 206-225. Cullmann's exposition of a *Heilsplan* can and should be defended on the basis that exegesis must always move toward a "construction." The fragmentary and scattered insights must be joined in a whole which joins the "letter" with the "spirit" of the entire context. A very fruitful employment of Cullmann's thesis can be found in Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949). See also, Antonio R. Gualtieri, "Time, Eternity and Contemporaneity with Christ," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, XVII, No. 4 (1964), 396-405.

b) With this linear definition in mind time and the world are viewed soteriologically. The idea of the creation of the world appeared late in Jewish thought. The experience of the exodus was the actual starting-point for biblical faith. The Old Testament doctrine of creation (and therefore the doctrine of the world) was an inference or deduction from the actual experience of redemption. The same reflexive perspective holds true for the New Testament. Christian thought began with the experience of redemption. The Christian belief in God as Creator of the world was derived from the fact of the central point, i.e., Jesus Christ.[2] Christ, the originator of the new creation, can now be seen to be the originator of the original creation now in its fulfillment. All things were created εἰς αυτὸν; he is the goal toward which God's creative purpose has consistently moved. Redemption and creation are thus linked together by the incarnation of God's eternal creative work. Experientially or existentially speaking, this is a valid description of the Christian perspective. It must, however, also be said that the doctrine of creation (or of God the Creator) occupies a position of logical and theological priority.[1] It is for this reason that the creed professes belief in God the Creator prior to the affirmation of belief in God the Redeemer of the world. Langdon Gilkey argues this point persuasively, though he somewhat overstates the case:

---

[1] Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

[2] Evode Beaucamp, *The Bible and the Universe* (London: Burns and Oates, 1962), pp. 45-84. See also Bernard W. Anderson, "The Earth is the Lord's," *Interpretation*, IX (1955), 5-18.

> The idea that God is the Creator of all things is the indispensable foundation on which the other beliefs of the Christian faith are based. It affirms what the Christian believes about the status of God in the whole realm of reality: He is the Creator of everything else.[2]

There is no reason why the existential and logical priorities cannot be held simultaneously as long as we recognize that they are two different kinds of statements. Indeed, they must be held together in this fashion, as Gilkey warns, because "the identity of God the Creator and God the Redeemer, of the almighty power of existence with the love of Christ, is the theological axis of the Gospel."[3] If the two are separated, "the Christian Gospel . . . falls apart."[4]

c) If the doctrine of God the Creator and God the Redeemer are held in this dialectic conjunction, the "world" is then seen as the result of God's loving intention and nothing in creation can be intrinsically evil. Sin is not the origin of temporal and spatial existence; God is. The limited time of man's existence is not evil, but man's refusal to accept the nature of his God-given existence constitutes evil. Theologically, this is to make a distinction between the "world" and the "worldly." A corollary distinction can be made between the "secular" and "secularism." This protects against a simple antithesis between the Gospel and the world as world. In this sense the word "secular" or the word "world" properly can function as terms which point to the actual consequences of God's redemptive history. The "world" or the "secular" is not to be depreciated or minimized; it is the stage and the content of God's historical purpose for man. The "secular," however, must be affirmed only as a second act, for the "world" of which the Christian speaks is not the "world" of the natural man. The "world" of the natural man is the world of secularism. Biblically, whenever the "world" is spoken of in a pejorative sense, as in the New Testament Johannine materials, the reference is to man's false ordering and understanding of the world and hence his ultimate fixation upon the world. His perspective becomes "worldly" or "secularistic."

---

[1] Langdon Gilkey, Maker of Heaven and Earth (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1959), p. 15.

[2] See Lampe, op. cit., p. 449, "It would seem that in the theology of the Old Testament redemption is logically and theologically prior to creation." Lampe's argument fails because he does not see a distinction between creation being logically prior and experientially prior.

[3] Gilkey, op. cit., p. 210.

[4] Ibid., p. 211.

There is sound biblical basis for making such a distinction between the "world" and "worldly" or the "secular" and "secularism." Indeed, the biblical doctrine of creation demands such a distinction.[1]

---

1. See Thomas A. Langford, "Secular Realm/Secularism," Christian Advocate, April 11, 1963, pp. 7-8, for a brief treatment of this theme. Langford's otherwise excellent article is unfortunate in its choice of the term "realms." There is only one realm, i.e., the "world" as God's creation. The other, "secularism," is not a realm but a distorted mode of human existence within the "world."

In no sense does this distinction between the "world" as God's gracious act of creation and man's mode of existence within that world without the Creator allow one to identify the "world" and God. The biblical emphasis asserts that the creation is good; it is not divine. Man's position of prominence over the good creation further underscores the legitimacy of man's secular involvement with his world. Within the biblical viewpoint there is not only a place but a mandate for scientific investigation of the world and man's place in that world. The simple fact that this is a so-called "secular discipline" in no wise invalidates it as a God-given vocation. It is significant to observe that western man's confidence in this pursuit is not so much grounded in science itself but in an assumed belief in the purposiveness implicit in the ground and method of investigation. It was Christian western man who developed the disciplines of scientific inquiry, and such a development demanded as its basis certain assumptions implied in the Christian doctrine of creation. "Only because men were already in a world of real and orderly relations would they have ever embarked on the arduous enterprise of understanding that world."[1] The Hebraic-Christian emphasis on the distinction between Creator and creation and the subsequent belief in man's position as administrator of the creation, responsible to the Creator, call for the development of so-called "secular disciplines" and "secular vocations."

d) It would, then, appear that any attempt of theology to

---

1. Gilkey, op. cit., p. 63. The same point is also made in E. L. Mascall, Christian Theology and Natural Science (New York: Ronald Press, 1956), pp. 91-98.

recover such categories as the "natural," the "world," or the "secular" necessitates a serious grappling with the basic biblical structure of time and the world. It is questionable whether there can be a proper recovery of these categories without three things: a basic recognition of time and the world as determined by God's gracious creative action; an understanding of the "secular" significance of the incarnate Christ as God's restorative action in time and in the world; and an equally balanced attention given to the expectation of the *parousia* as the "end" (τέλος) already implied in a "beginning" (ἀρχή). In other words, a theological recovery of the "secular" is not possible apart from a clear understanding of the biblical concepts of time and history. The biblical categories of time, world, and creation demand such a time-line or *Heilsplan*, and such a *Heilsplan* is the basis for the biblical understanding and placement of man's secular involvements. It is only as these three "timeful events" are held in unity that Christian theology can speak of the "secular" with connotations other than those of derision or idolatry.

B. Graeco-Roman Background

The intellectual framework of the Graeco-Roman world into which the Christian faith moved consisted principally of two factors; Greek metaphysical speculation and Gnostic religiosity. Christians and non-Christians alike employed the conceptual and verbal apparatus of these already existing movements to express their faith-convictions. This encounter with Hellenistic thought forms is not without serious consequences for an understanding of the manner in which the Christian faith conceives of the "world" or the "secular."

In the earliest period of Christian theological productivity Platonism offered the predominant philosophical climate. In Plato's theory of knowledge the dualism of the world of appearance and the real world of Forms or Ideas provided the principal motif. Real, objective existence was confined to the eternal realm of Ideas, while the world of matter was seen to be a transient, shadow world of copy or reflection of the eternal realm. Paralleling this over-all view of knowledge and metaphysics was the Platonic anthropological assumption that man consisted of an immortal soul which was separatable from but temporarily encased in a mortal body. While in Plato these two levels, the material and the spiritual, were closely related, they were also clearly distinguished. It is not difficult to see that the emphasis upon the Ideas as static, transcendent, eternal reality implied a pejorative perspective on the world and man's involvements therein. This is what has been historically referred to as Platonic dualism. The fact that the historical setting into which Christianity emerged was in reality a hostile force against the new religion encouraged the early Christian thinkers to pursue this dualism for practical reasons as well as philosophical. The world was the arena of evil and corruption and, therefore, a realm from which to be saved. That this dualism permeated many facets of early Christian thought can be seen in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers such as Barnabas and the Epistle to Diognetus.[1]

In the period of late antiquity Neoplatonism provided the same service which earlier Platonism had served. In Neoplatonism there was not to be found so much a dualism between matter and spirit as a hierarchy of levels of reality running from inanimate matter through nature and man to the realm of superhuman spirits and finally to the realm of the ineffable One or Absolute or God. It is this metaphysical view which when translated into religious and ethical language instructed man to flee from the world to his "fatherland" which was the space of mystical contemplation of the eternal One. That this form of Greek philosophy played a prominent role in Christian thought can be seen in the writings of Augustine.[1]

---

[1] See the following section B, 1, of this chapter.

In so far as they were philosophers, the Gnostics participated in a similar kind of dualistic worldview. It is impossible to speak of Gnosticism as an integrated and unified religious system. It is much more accurate to see Gnosticism as a general climate of opinion. Nevertheless, Gnosticism in its variegated forms presented certain uniform convictions. Among these the most prominent was the sharp dualism between matter and spirit. The religious motivation of Gnosticism was to escape from the evil of the world and to rest in the beatitude of a higher world freed from the contaminations of the material world. The principal concern of the Gnostic was salvation -- a salvation from the world.[2]

Martin Buber has characterized the efforts of Greek philosophical speculation to frame a worldview in terms of different levels of reality as the "cosmological habitation."[1] The major characteristic of this cosmological form of thinking is that the category of space triumphs over the category of time. The fact that this is so finds support in that the highest symbol in Greek philosophy for being itself is the circle or sphere which is really a space concept. In the domination of space over time in Greek philosophical thought lies one of the most difficult problems in reckoning with the growth of western Christian thought. Paul Tillich writes of this fact:

---

[1] See section C, 3, of this chapter.

[2] For the most able treatments of Gnosticism see G. Quispel, Gnosis als Weltreligion (Zurich: Origo Verlag, 1951), and Hans Jonas, The Gnostic Religion (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963). See also Johannes Knudsen, "The Gnostic View," in The Scope of Grace, ed. Philip J. Hefner (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), pp. 121-140.

> There is no philosophy of history in Greek thought, and where history is dealt with it is considered as only a section of the long circular motion of the whole cosmos from birth to death, of one world replacing the other. Time is swallowed by space in this cosmological tragedy.[2]

It is therefore understandable that a later period of major Platonic influence, i.e., Neoplatonism, should pass into mysticism. The mystical contemplation of man was to remove him from one space into another space, i.e., to remove him from the space of the world into the space which is beyond time.

> Mysticism is no real escape from the predominance of space. It extinguishes time and space, but in so doing, it maintains the basic presupposition that time cannot create something entirely new, that everything in time is subject to the circle of birth and death, and that no new creature can arise. . . . Mysticism is the most subtle form of the predominance of space.[3]

---

[1] Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor-Smith (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), pp. 126-132.

[2] Paul Tillich, Theology of Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 34.

[3] Ibid.

The conflict between essentially two ways of thought, temporal and spatial, can be seen in that in the translation of New Testament Greek into the Latin Vulgate the term αἰών became *saeculum*. Basically, Latin contained two words for "world" -- *saeculum* and *mundus*. The relationship between the two words is not an easy one to distinguish. In spite of its early rather "earthy" meaning ("seed"), *saeculum* rapidly, as the history of semantics goes, came to refer to "human seed," hence "mankind" and finally "generation."[1] *Saeculum* is fundamentally a "time" word, though in Latin usage it took on the colorations of *mundus* which was always a "space" word and usually served as the Latin equivalent of κόσμος meaning the universe or world-order in contrast to κτίσις which is a historical term speaking of God's act of creation.

This does not, however, completely clarify the ambiguity for the ambiguity is not only in the Latin but is inherent in the Greek. This ambiguity exists because of the inability of the Greek conceptualizations always to convey the precise dynamic, temporal notion of the Hebrews. In terms of "worldviews" (with which the Hebrew should be most uncomfortable) there was the one basic difference: the Greeks conceived of reality spatially while the Hebrews conceived of it temporally. The "world" was a container for the Greeks while it was a movement of time from creation to consummation for the Hebrews. Reality was history for the Hebrew, whereas in Greek philosophical thought reality was spatially conceived.

---

[1] See Eric Partridge, *Origins: The Encyclopedia of Words: Their Meanings, Etymology and Uses Through History* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), p. 601. See also Alexander Souter, ed., *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A. D.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), p. 361.

This distinction in two characteristic ways of thinking cannot be underestimated in terms of relevance for this study. When the Hebrew met the Greek world, and in turn the Latin world, a transformation of conceptual vocabulary was essential. Which would triumph -- the Greek or the Hebrew?[1] Would the "world" become "history" as in Hebraic thought; would the κόσμος become αἰών , as in New Testament Greek thought; and in the Latin world would the spatial *mundus* become the temporal *saeculum*? To some degree this happened. On the other hand, the history of western Christian thought has been dominated by characteristic Greek conceptualization. Even the translation from Greek into Latin tended still to carry the characteristic Greek concern with "space" in contrast to the Hebraic concern for "time." This is not to imply that the Greek mentality did not wrestle with the concept and reality of time, but metaphysical thought tended to brunt the characteristically temporal mode of Hebrew thought. In the transition through the Hellenistic mode into the Latin a tendency was set afoot which has continued to the present day. This tendency had the effect of diluting the temporal character of the basic concepts and bringing these under an embracive metaphysical structure the concepts of which were more substantialistic and thereby spatial. As has been pointed out previously, the pejorative connotation of the word "secular" is rooted in the spatialized Greek concept of the world as a lower space in contrast to the static, eternal realm of a higher space.

---

[1] This divergence between Hebrew and Greek thought concerning the concept of time is sharply drawn in Ernst von Dobschütz, "Zeit und Raum im Denken des Urchristentums," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XLI (1922), 212ff. The overdrawn antipodal distinctions of Dobschütz have been corrected by Gerhard Delling, *Das Zeitverständnis des neuen Testaments* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1940). The fact still remains that on the basis of Dobschütz's extensive and near exhaustive survey of the material his thesis still stands. This distinction can be seen in the writings of Anaximander where το ἀπειρου corresponds to the Hebrew *ōlam*. Yet the two terms are significantly far afield from each other. The Greeks' το ἀπειρου or boundless was actually the first cause of all things and therefore spatially conceived. The Israelites meant by *ōlam* the beginning of all becoming and therefore was temporally conceived. The Greek understanding of the universe was similarly spatial, while the Hebrews referred to the universe as "heaven and earth," *hashshamayim we ha'arets*. This latter concept was temporal since the Hebrews knew their beginning (creation) and their history (Genesis 2:4). As Boman, *op. cit.*, p. 154, points out, in the Hellenistic age it was easy for the Hebrews to translate the Greek by *ōlam*. This was possible again because there is a fundamental difference between the two mentalities in understanding the nature of the universe and the question of time.

C. The Place of the Secular in Pre-Reformation Theology

The earliest Christian community found itself in a world civilization which was essentially hostile to such a movement. The Christian writers and thinkers found themselves also compelled to seek a point of contact between their message and the philosophical climate of the times. This presented the community with an unparalleled dilemma.

1. The Dilemma in the Earliest Christian Community

Ancient Israel had been an integrated community in the fullest sense. No distinction within the community could be made between the so-called "secular" and "religious" spheres. Yahweh had made his covenant with the whole people, and the covenant embraced the entirety of the covenant community's life. "The community of true religion and the political community of Israel" were never, according to Robertson Smith, "separated in thought."[1] However, by the eighth century B.C., the prophetic movement in Israel under the stress of conquerors' hands developed the concept of "the remnant." While the larger community of Israel could give itself over to apostasy, a faithful remnant within that community became the hope of the continuation of Yahweh's covenant with Israel. The New Israel, the Christian Church, found this historical situation accentuated. Therefore, the concept of the remnant, a small minority within the fabric of an alien empire, was an exceedingly relevant idea as they sought to live within this empire structure.

Even within the historical span of Jesus' life the question of how the disciple was to relate himself to the secular political sphere was raised. The words of Jesus regarding the issue of taxation reveal this.[2] A simple distinction between the two realms could not be drawn, however, since the Roman Empire as a political structure had sacred devotions of its own. Equally the Christian community recognized that it could not confine its life exclusively to worship and devotion; _habebant omnia communia_ -- "all they that believed were together, and _had all things in common_."[3] The problem was not one of the individual's personal belief in conflict with a secular state with a religion of its own; the problem was how one community could exist within the context of another, larger community.[4]

---

[1] W. Robertson Smith, _The Prophets of Israel_ (London: A. and C. Black, 1914), p. 275.

[2] Mark 12:17; Matthew 22:21.

[3] Acts 2:44.

[4] John Baillie, _What is Christian Civilization?_ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945), p. 7.

That the earliest Church wrestled with this complex matter can be seen in the documents of the New Testament. "You must be obedient," writes Paul, ". . . for the same reason as you pay taxes -- since magistrates are God's officers, bent upon the maintenance of order and authority."[1] Earlier in the same letter Paul had stated the cardinal New Testament premise upon which a relationship between the two authorities rested:

> Every subject must obey the government authorities, for no authority exists apart from God; the existing authorities have been constituted by God. Hence, anyone who resists authority is opposing the divine order. . . .[2]

Paul's solution lay in recognizing the Roman Empire as a secular force and at the same time seeing that it assured order and cohesion needed for communal life. While the empire is evil, God exercises a restraining power over it and even uses it to achieve his ends. At the time of Paul's Roman correspondence the matter could be handled in such a manner since Christianity was viewed by the Roman magistrates as a sect of Judaism. Judaism had been given a privilege of a _religio licita_. By the time Paul, himself, is imprisoned in Rome, the situation has changed. When Christianity is no longer viewed as being one of Israel's many sectarian children, the Roman authorities recognize the real threat which this movement poses. When the Roman authorities see Christianity as a religion standing on its own grounds, a more rigid antithetical tension sets in. In the context of this new development, the apostle Peter speaks, ". . . we ought to obey God rather than men."[1] This is the situation which confronts Christianity as it moves into the Roman world at the conclusion of the first century. In such a situation it seems inevitable that a marked degree of asceticism and "world-denial" should express itself in Christianity's adjustment to these conditions.

---

[1] Romans 13:5-6. Moffatt's translation.
[2] Romans 13:1-2.

> Thou shalt share all things with thy neighbor and shalt not say that they are thy own property, for if you are sharers in that which is incorruptible, how much more in that which is corruptible? . . . So far as thou canst, thou shalt keep thy soul pure.[2]

Early Christian sectarian movements took up this dual morality so characteristic of Greek philosophy with a much more rigid distinction between the "world" and the "spirit." The Marcionite movement, for example, repudiated the world on the basis of a dualistic metaphysics, and on the basis of this dualism asceticism was made a requirement of every member.[3] Gnosticism had the same metaphysical dualism at its core, and the same "world-rejection" was the end result.[4] The Church at large repudiated these extremes,[5] but the movements of asceticism continued. While Clement of Alexandria did not consider asceticism a requirement for membership in the Church, he did, however, extol those

---

1. Acts 5:29.
2. Barnabas 19:8 in The Apostolic Fathers, Vol. I, trans. Kirsopp-Lake (London: W. Heinemann, 1919), 405.
3. Philip Carrington, The Early Christian Church, Vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 307-328. See also Pieter Godfred Verweijr, Evangelium und neues Gesetz in der ältesten Christenheit bis auf Marcion (Utrecht: Kemink, 1960).
4. Hans Jonas, op. cit.
5. See I Timothy 4:1f.

who participated in such practices as evidence of an ideal break with the world.[1] With Origen, however, asceticism seems to be a necessary practice to allow the soul to reach its full comprehension of the *logos*.[2] The same Hellenistic metaphysical dualism is implicit in another early writing which summarizes the ascetic rejection of the world:

> For the distinction between the Christians and other men is neither in country nor language nor customs. For they do not dwell in cities in some place of their own, nor do they use any strange variety of dialect, nor practice an extraordinary kind of life. This teaching of theirs has not been discovered by the intellect or thought of busy men, nor are they the advocates of any human doctrine as some men are. Yet while living in Greek and barbarian cities, according as each obtained his lot, and following the local customs, both in clothing and food and in the rest of life, they show forth the wonderful and confessedly strange character of the constitution of their own citizenship. They dwell in their fatherlands, but as if sojourners in them; they share all things as citizens, and suffer all things as strangers. . . . To put it shortly, what the soul is in the body the Christians are in the world. . . . The flesh hates the soul, and wages war upon it, though it has suffered no evil, because it is prevented from gratifying its pleasures, and the world hates the Christians though it has suffered no evil, because they are opposed to its pleasures. The soul loves the flesh which hates it and the limbs, and Christians love those who hate them. The soul has been shut up in the body, but itself sustains as in a prison, but themselves sustain the world. The soul dwells immortal in a mortal tabernacle, and Christians sojourn among corruptible things, waiting for the incorruptibility which is in heaven. The soul when evil treated in food and drink becomes better, and Christians, when buffeted, day by day increase more. God has appointed them to so great a post and it is not right for them to decline it.[3]

---

[1] Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, Books II and III, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. II, Alexander Roberts and James D. Donaldson, eds. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), 237-276. See also, Wilhelm Wagner, *Der Christ und der Welt nach Clemens von Alexandrien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1903).

[2] Origen, *The Instructions of Commodianus* LVII; *De Principiis*, XI in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. V, 214, 296-300.

[3] *The Epistle to Diognetus* in *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. II, trans. Kirsopp-Lake, 359-363.

To be sure, the seeds of such an asceticism were to be found in the documents of the New Testament itself. For example, Paul held that marriage was "good," but the word "better" was reserved for those who voluntarily denied themselves marriage.[1] Here is seen the beginnings of a two-degree morality. A comparison of the parallel accounts of the "rich young ruler" episode in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew reveals the early church's development in this direction. In Mark Jesus simply charges the young man to sell his possessions, while in Matthew a prefatory clause has been added, "If you would be perfect."[2] This is the beginning of a two-degree morality in which there is implied a pejorative judgment upon involvements in the "things" of the world. As the early Church moved into the Graeco-Roman world an additional impetus was supplied in this direction from non-Christian sources.[3]

As a community conscious of its "remnant" position in an overwhelmingly hostile society, the church increasingly found philosophical support for a two-degree morality which in time would become accentuated to the point of denying the "world" a legitimate place in a Christian view of life. This understanding of the world presents itself visibly in the history of the Christian Church in the monastic movements.

2. Monastic Movement *versus* Secular Laity

The historical outcome of dual-standard morality was the development of the monastic system with the clear-cut distinction between

---

1. I Corinthians 7:38.
2. Matthew 19:21. Cf. Mark 10:21.
3. Such sources are cited by Hans Lietzmann, *The Era of the Church Fathers* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), pp. 126-128.

monastic perfection and secular involvement in the sin of the world. The Egyptian Anchorites[1] are the first example of such a fully developed movement. By the end of the third century this movement was actively advocating a repudiation of the world and the retreat to a hermitage away from the evils of secular civilization. At the same time as the Anchorite movement was coming into full growth, Pachomius the Copt in northern Egypt was molding monastic communal life *per se*.[2] The major theological tenets were similar to those which gave motivation to the Anchorite movement. The world was characterized as being demonic to such an extent that man's soul as well as body was threatened. The only hope for man who had such knowledge of his condition was to accept the Christian religion. This, however, necessitated a repudiation of the world, and the best way to learn the discipline of world-repudiation was to go to an ascetic and learn the stages from him. Reitzenstein points out[3] that there is an occasional recognition of the virtues of the "laity," but such recognition was to prod the monks from self-righteousness. Monasticism spread wherever Christianity was to be found. Jerome writes of monasticism in Palestine, and Epiphanius, one of the early Fathers, had grown up as a Palestinian ascetic.[1] Tatian, whose Diatessaron, a harmony of the four canonical gospels, was influential into the fifth century, was a Syrian monastic, and is regarded in the Eastern Church as the founder of the Encratite movement.[2] The codification of monastic practice in the East was achieved by Saint Basil, between 358 and 364, and the same work was accomplished in the West a century and a half later by Saint Benedict.[3]

---

[1] Information about this movement is gained from Anthanasius' life of Antony available for this study only through Richard Reitzenstein, *Des Anthanasius' Werk über das Leben des Antonius* (Heidelberg: *Sitzungs'ber. Heidelberg Akademie, 1914, Abh. 8*). As Reitzenstein points out, from this life of Antony one gains more insight into the theology of the bishop than of the hermit. The justification for withdrawal from society was to wage a final, personal, "eschatological" war with the demons who infest the world. The whole life of the hermit was motivated by an accentuated apocalyptic vision of the Last Judgment, and each day was to be lived as if it were genuinely the last day. The way to conquer the demons in this apocalyptic setting was to concentrate on the "path of virtue." It was recognized that these virtues were taught by the secular philosophers but unattainable by man except through a withdrawal from and denial of the world.

[2] See Lietzmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-149.

[3] Reitzenstein, *Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Mönchtums und der frühchristlichen Begriffe Gnostiker und Pneumatiker* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1916), pp. 34ff.

The impact of monasticism was not simply upon those who participated in it. It had its impact upon the Christian community outside the confines of the monastery. Bishops began to be recruited, at times against their desires, from among those who had received monastic training.[4] When monks were called back to positions in the Church in a secular world they tended to bring with them into the secular priesthood certain mores and convictions gained in the retreats. This is particularly true in the case of sexual mores and specifically of the practice of celibacy. While the church never committed itself to an exclusive practice of asceticism, the church itself was greatly influenced by the ascetic practices of the monasteries.

---

1. See Matthew Black, The Scrolls and Christian Origins (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 82.
2. E. Preuschen, Untersuchungen zum Diatessaron Tatians (Heidelberg: Akademie Heidelbergs, 1915), p. iv.
3. See Hans von Campenhausen, Lateinische Kirchenväter (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1960), p. 181.
4. For example, John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, had served apprenticeship as a hermit-monk.

One major inconsistency lurked behind the emphasis on "world-denial" among the early ascetics. In spite of their emphasis upon denying the world, they could never quite escape from that world even in their places of withdrawal. Their organizational structure still bore a resemblance to the organizational structures of communities in secular society. Even their ethical rules and "counsel of perfection" in many instances were drawn from the secular Haustafeln (household duties) of the time.[1] The ideal of the disciplined life freed from contamination with the world had its parallels in Greek and Roman philosophies. The metaphysical dualism upon which the system was predicated had more affinity with Greek and Gnostic forms of thought than with the Hebraic tradition.

Another problem confronting this position is one mixed with both practical and theological factors. The conception of sin as being embodied in the world from which the ascetics withdrew is far too simplified to bear the test of personal experience or theological reflection. The very fact that the monk had to withdraw from the secular world should have indicated to him that he was fighting something in his own nature. This identification of evil with the material world was one of the assertions of Gnosticism which could never stand the test of experience. Likewise, as the leaders of the monasteries discovered, there was a type of inverted "worldliness" implicit in the rejection of the world. Pride in oneself and one's ethical attainments is always the impediment between man and God. One can affirm the world by a vigorous denial of it as easily as by vigorously embracing it!

---

[1] See Rudolf Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, II, trans. K. Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), 231-234, for full citation of original sources.

The most serious problem of this attempted solution of the secular is more strictly a theological one. There was in the monastic movement and its rationale an obliteration of what has previously been called the biblical linear understanding of time and its three main points: creation, Christ, and consummation. If attention was focused upon any one of these points, it was the last. When attention is given with such heavy emphasis upon the final point in the time-line, there inevitably arises an accentuated form of apocalypticism. If any attention is accorded to the mid-point in the time-line, i.e., Christ, it is to convey the picture of him as a law-giver, the dispenser of ethical admonitions for the disciplining of the body and the soul until all emotions are banished. This is to make of Christianity in essence an ethic instead of a salvation faith. Little or no attention is given to the first point on the time-line, i.e., creation. It is the created order from which they sought to escape. Their fundamental presupposition about the nature of the secular order blinded them to the biblical insistence upon the goodness of creation. The attempted solution failed in not recognizing that man stands in a dialectical relationship with this created order, i.e., having it as though he had it not. The focus is almost exclusively upon God as Judge and the significance of history is that its cataclysmic conclusion is near at hand. Gone is the fuller comprehension of God the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, and gone also is the grasp of God's redemptive purpose for the creation.

3. Augustine's "Two Cities"

The sack of Rome by Alaric the Goth in 410 shook both the secular world and the Church. St. Jerome, from his monastery in Bethlehem wrote: "The whole world perished in one city."[1] This shaking event brought down an avalanche of accusations on the Christian Church. The Church had been the force which undermined the Empire and caused its fall. Augustine of Hippo took pen in hand to defend the Church against these charges, and the result was one of Christianity's classic statements of the relationship between the "secular" and the "religious" realms. Whether Augustine intended that the work should be of such monumental scope is questionable from an analysis of the structure of the book. It would seem that only after he had begun his answer to the immediate accusation in Book I does he realize that this would lead him inevitably to questions of apologetics and historical interpretation.

In the analysis of the major ideas in *The City of God* which follows it will be seen that two Greek philosophical concepts dominate Augustine's thought through the work: Neoplatonic asceticism and the Greek concept that perfection is static and transcendent reality.[2] What is at stake throughout the work, therefore, is the question of the relation of religious and secular power, and the forms in which this relationship is ultimately resolved are basically those provided for

---

[1] Jerome, *Preface to Commentary on Ezechiel*, in Migne, *Patrologiae, Latinae tomus*, XXV, 15-16.

[2] See Albert T. Mollegen, *Christianity and Modern Man* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1961), p. 30. *Cf.* a similar thesis in G. Nygren, *Das Prädestinationsproblem in der Theologie Augustins* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1956).

Augustine by the philosophical tools at hand, namely Neoplatonism.

Secular history or society is the scene of a warfare between two opposite and irreconcilable forces, faith and unbelief. In the human society these are organized as temporal manifestations of two supra-historical realities, the City of God and the City of the World.

> So two loves have constituted two cities -- the earthly is formed by love of self even to contempt of God, the heavenly by love of God even to contempt of self. For the one glories in herself, the other in the Lord. The one seeks glory from man; for the other God, the witness of the conscience, is the greatest glory. The one lifts up her head to her own glory; the other says to her God, 'My glory and the lifter up of my head.' In the one the lust for power prevails, both in her own rulers and in the nations she subdues; in the other all serve each other in charity, governors by taking thought for all and subjects by obeying.[1]

In temporal existence man must live in both realities. If he is unable to deny the City of the World and become a celibate monk, then he must assume certain responsibilities in the world, though he must take these up with the full recognition that there is a higher life which he has not chosen.

> I am considerably surprised that such learned men who pronounce all material and sensible things to be altogether inferior to those that are spiritual and intelligible, should mention bodily contact in connection with the blessed life. Is that sentiment of Plotinus forgotten? "We must fly to our Fatherland." There is the Father, there our all. Our way is to become like God.[2]

---

1. Augustine, The City of God, XIV, 28 (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1958), 321.
2. Ibid., IX, 17.

For those who cannot "fly to the Fatherland" there is always the world wherein they must reside. The motivation for their actions in this world must be to convert the world as much as possible to the ideal of the City of God. Augustine, himself, was a personification of this regenerative approach to the secular. He did not hesitate to borrow from the Neoplatonists, particularly as noted above from Plotinus.[1] Man always lives in a mixed relationship of both the City of God and the City of the World. Augustine speaks of the "temporal careers of those two cities, which are mixed together from the beginning to the end."[2] Living in this mixed temporal mode, man must ever attempt to bring the secular City of the World under the control and redemption of the heavenly order.[3] It is sometimes easy to be misled by Augustine's figures of the two cities. They are not absolute in the sense of representing the "pure good" and the "pure evil." As historical manifestations of supra-historical realities, the Church is the temporal manifestation of that which will ultimately come, but the Roman Empire is

---

1. There are at least four specific tributes to Plotinus in _The City of God_. Cf. Augustine, _ibid_., IX, 17; X, 14; X, 16. For correlation of these with Plotinus' _Enneads_, see Bruno Switzlski, _Neoplatonism and Augustine_ (Washington, D. C.: Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, 1951).
2. Augustine, _op_. _cit_., XVIII, 54.
3. The criticism of Augustine's "redemptionist" relation with secular culture by Albert Mollegen seems unjustifiably harsh. Mollegen criticizes: "The best that one hopes for in this world is, therefore, the Christianization of the culture of the day. God is not a revolutionary, he is not the God of whom the Magnificat declares: 'He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the wicked from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent away empty.' God is really the God of Arnold Toynbee's philosophy of history. He is conservative who baptizes and purifies the status quo and makes it as good as possible and uses Satan as the revolutionary." Mollegen, _op_. _cit_., p. 31.

not wholly and intrinsically evil. That which makes secular culture evil is its god-defying spirit in which it conceives of itself in an autonomous and therefore idolatrous fashion. Since this seems to be the manner in which secular culture always conducts itself, it is under the condemnation of God.

> One of these, the earthly, has made for herself false gods as she chose, from anywhere or even out of man, to serve by sacrifices; but the other, the heavenly, a stranger and pilgrim on earth, makes no false gods but herself is made by the true God, whose true sacrifice she herself is. Both alike enjoy temporal goods or suffer temporal ills, but differ in faith, in hope, in love, until they be separated by the final judgment and each receive its end, of which there is no end.[1]

The saeculum[2] is precisely the realm of man's natural relationships and has potentialities for good and for evil. Augustine's rejection of Manichaeism prevents him from holding to an absolute dualism between good and evil. There is no such thing as absolute evil. The two cities are distinguished by the one being good by nature and will and the other good by nature but evil in will, yet even the perverse will is held in check by divine providence.

> These two angelic communities, then, dissimilar and contrary to one another, the one both by nature good and by will upright, the other also good by nature but by will depraved, as they are exhibited in other and more explicit passages of holy writ, so I think they are spoken of in this book of *Genesis* under the names of light and darkness. . . .[3]

---

[1] Augustine, *op. cit.*, XVIII, 54.

[2] Nowhere in Augustine's writings does he employ this term, *saeculum*, except in the pejorative sense of speaking of non-Christians. In the above it is used as descriptive of man's natural, cultural, relationships.

[3] Augustine, *op. cit.*, XI, 33.

An even stronger statement is found later in the same treatise:

> And therefore there is a nature in which evil does not or even cannot exist; but there cannot be a nature in which there is no good. Hence not even the nature of the devil himself is evil, in so far as it is nature, but it was made evil by being perverted.[1]

Having established the basic premise of two supra-historical realities, the City of God and the City of the World, and having shown how these exist in the world in mixed form, Augustine successfully defends himself from disparaging the created order which was brought into being by the good Creator.

That which is evil is not the nature of man nor the nature of the world but the will turned against its own true nature.

> And if we ask the cause of the misery of the bad, it occurs to us, and not unreasonably, that they are miserable because they have forsaken Him who supremely is, and have turned to themselves who have no such essence. And this vice, what else is it called than pride? For 'pride is the beginning of sin.'[2]

In order to guard against the claim of an evil nature behind the will, Augustine pushes his argument further.

> If the further question be asked, What was the efficient cause of their evil will? there is none. For what is it which makes the will bad, when it is the will itself which makes the action bad? And consequently the bad will is the cause of the bad action, but nothing is the efficient cause of the bad will. For if anything is the cause, this thing is either good or bad. If good, who is so left to himself as to say that a good will makes a will bad?[3]

---

1. Augustine, *ibid.*, XIX, 13.
2. *Ibid.*, XII, 6.
3. *Ibid*.

If man is by nature good, what, then, is this "good"? Augustine sought to argue that man's highest good must never be inferior to man, for this would make him less than his nature. Man's highest good must be the Supreme, since it is this which is superior to man, in the same manner as the soul is superior to the body. Man's highest good is the source of his nature and the object of his ethical relationships, i.e., God.

> That great Platonist, therefore, says that the rational soul, -- in which class he comprehends the souls of the blessed immortals who inhabit heaven, -- has no nature superior to it save God, the Creator of the world and the soul itself, and that these heavenly spirits derive their blessed life and the light of truth from the same source as ourselves. . . .[1]

Man's nature, therefore, was created to behold, love, serve, and worship God. While the will may change, this nature bent by creation towards possessing the object of *caritas* never changes.[2]

Even though the perverse will of man prevents his establishing any true society of justice, Augustine will hold that within the realm of the *saeculum* all that man accomplishes is not void of positive value. Man is capable of achieving a certain relative, natural, yet incomplete justice, and this Augustine calls *concordia*. Man cannot rely upon this so-called natural justice, for to do so would be to claim for the world the status of its Creator. Nevertheless, even a dependence upon man-made *concordia* bears a hidden witness to the nature of all things.

---

[1] *Ibid.*, X, 16.
[2] *Ibid.*

The sinfulness of such dependence which characterizes the *saeculum* has itself a more fundamental dependence on the good, created order.

> Even what is perverted must of necessity be in harmony with, and in dependence on, and in some part of the order of things, for otherwise it would have no existence at all. . . . There may be peace without war, but there cannot be war without some kind of peace, because war presupposes the existence of some natures to wage it, and these natures cannot exist without peace of one kind or another.[1]

Augustine found that man's secular involvements were focused in the structure of the secular state. There had been no necessity for such secular structures until the fall of man. Prior to this the law of nature or the law of creation had been all-sufficient to meet man's needs. With the entrance of sin on the historical scene the secular structures of society became necessary. The *saeculum* was simultaneously the consequence of sin and a providential check upon sin. Augustine's "splendid vices" played a dual role. What Augustine achieved in this respect was a Christianizing of the Stoic idea of justice, and one can see why Augustine could never claim that the secular order was intrinsically evil. Conceivably, then, a certain *concordia* existed between the City of God and the City of the World, but the effectiveness of this concord was in ratio to the religious orientation of the secular powers. Augustine saw a radically different relationship between the secular state which deified itself and hence became a god-denying force, and the secular state which recognized a limitation of its power. In other words, the saeculum was never good in itself, but always had a status relative to the religious. Augustine for this reason still held to the superior life of the celibate, the monastic, the ascetic.[1]

---

[1] *Ibid.*, XIX, 12, 23.

It was not too difficult to delineate what is involved in a concrete definition of the "secular city." Difficulty arises, however, when the City of God is brought in thought into the sphere of time and space. As a rule the conflict between the two cities is a conflict between the general work of God in the world and the work of the Satanic powers.[2] On the other hand, Augustine is led quite involuntarily in his thought to a kind of identification of the City of God with the terrestrial Church, but unquestionably even here the City of God is the communio fidelium. Even this, however, tends to give a static quality to what could otherwise be a dynamic view of history. Since the eschatological dimension of history (the millennium) is already being realized in the Church, the final relationship between the secular city and the heavenly city will be a relationship between two static institutions of the societas, i.e., the Church and the secular political power.

Within this mass of perdition the secular power serves the Kingdom of God in two ways. First, it performs a preservative function in that it seeks to maintain an external peace.

---

1. Ibid., X, 16; IX, 17.
2. Adolf von Harnack, Outlines of the History of Dogma (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), p. 358.
3. Augustine, op. cit., XIX, 17.

> The earthly city, which does not live by faith, seeks an earthly peace, and the end it proposes, in the well-ordered concord of civic obedience and rule, is the combination of men's wills to attain the things which are helpful to this life.[1]

Second, it promotes the worship of the true God and serves to punish those who practice idolatry and false worship. In the Donatist controversy Augustine held that it was the state's right to punish the heretics.[2] If the state does not fulfill these functions in service to the Kingdom of God, then the citizens of the heavenly kingdom have no alternative but to disavow the authority of the secular state.[3]

The _saeculum_ always stands in a relative position to the City of God. It exists because sin is present. Were there no sin, then there would be no need for the secular structures of the _societas_. Therefore, the _saeculum_, while never accused of being totally evil, is never regarded by Augustine as being simply "good." The secular sphere was the lesser of evils from one perspective and the best which sinful man could hope for apart from the Kingdom in another perspective.

While Niebuhr is correct in describing the relation between faith and culture in Augustine as that of "conversion" or "redemption," there is no following of this direction of thought into a Christian social ethic applicable to the structures of secular culture. Augustine was prevented from doing this because of his static concept of the City of God in the temporal order. There was no opportunity for Christians to look forward to a better age within the temporal order. The consummation for which Augustine looked in the closing chapters of his treatise was actually the annihilation of the saeculum and the cessation of time.[1]

---

[1] Augustine, _op. cit._, XIX, 17.
[2] _Ibid._, XIX, 17.
[3] _Ibid._

Augustine, more than any thinker since the second century, saw the crucial importance of understanding the Christian Gospel within the context of historical thought. In this respect, he recovered in one fashion for Christian thought a concept of history which gave emphasis to the divine acts of creation, incarnation, and consummation. There is implicitly an opportunity for a dynamic view of history and God's relation to the saeculum. While he was cautious never to assign evil to nature but to the will, he was, nevertheless, stricken with a fear of nature. Certainly, the fact of the fall constitutes some of this hesitancy to give a more prominent place in theology to the natural, but the question cannot be put aside: If it had not been for the influences of Neoplatonic asceticism upon Augustine, could he not have dealt more positively with the natural order, and have done this without any radical alteration of the doctrine of human perdition? Certainly the grace of an incarnate God does more than set man's feet in the Church and lift his eyes to the beatific heights! Such thought simply encourages an uncritical acceptance of the secular structures of the Church which could make the Church as God-defying as any state structure. Likewise, the Greek concept of perfection as being static and transcendent carries implicitly a negative evaluation of possibilities for Christian life in time, history, and the world. At best, the Christian's life in the City of God on earth is but an interim period of waiting for the eternal translation. What has happened to the biblical understanding of time and history in Augustine's thought is that creation has lost a God-given value, the incarnation does not restore man to nature but separates him from it, and the consummation becomes man's escape from the *saeculum*.

---

[1] At this point Mollegen's criticism of Augustine's view of history is apt. "It is an interpretation which stops, or attempts to stop, history. . . . It seems to abolish the category of time. The significant thing about history is that a shaft of eternity pours into this order on earth, baptizing and purifying it, lifting people above it, sending them into the beyond. The dynamics of history have stopped; there is no thrust toward the future." See Mollegen, op. cit., p. 32.

4. Francis of Assisi and the Discovery of the Natural

Classical man was weighted down with the burdens of nature. His soul was encased in the physical body. His body was subject to the vicissitudes of existence. He stood in fear of physical death. It could hardly be expected that he would turn to serious reflection on physical nature. It remained for the Renaissance to bring this aspect of man's secular life into sharp focus. Strangely, however, one of the first expressions of this discovery came not from the university centers and the halls of secular learning but from the poor mendicant, Francis of Assisi. In "The Canticle of the Sun" which is attributed to St. Francis came one of the earliest expressions of a fearless embracing on the part of Christian thought of the natural world. There is no fear but joyous acceptance as Francis sings, not in some Nordic romantic manner but in what Thomas of Celano calls an extended paraphrase of the

148th Psalm.[1]

Be Thou praised, my Lord, with all Thy creatures,
above all Brother Sun,
who gives the day and lightens us therewith.

Be Thou praised, my Lord, of Sister Moon and the stars,
in the heaven hast Thou formed them, clear and
precious and comely.

Be Thou praised, my Lord, of Brother Wind,
and of the air, and the cloud, and of fair and of
all weather,
by which Thou givest to Thy creatures sustenance.

By Thou praised, my Lord, of Sister Water,
which is much useful and humble and precious and pure.

Be Thou praised, My Lord, of Brother Fire,
by which Thou hast lightened the night,
and he is beautiful and joyful and robust and strong.

Be Thou praised, my Lord, of our Sister Mother Earth,
which sustains and hath us in rule,
and produces divers fruits with coloured flowers
and herbs.

. . . .

Be Thou praised, my Lord, of our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no man living may escape,
woe to those who die in mortal sin;

Blessed are they who are found in thy most holy will,
for the second death shall not work them ill.

Praise ye and bless my Lord, and give Him thanks
and serve Him with great humility.[2]

Most commentaries on this hymn of St. Francis are heavily reliant on Matthew Arnold's translation or variants of that translation. Most translations based upon this version make St. Francis guilty of the

---

1. Thomas of Celano, St. Francis of Assisi, trans. Placid Hermann, O.F.M. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1963), p. 58.
2. St. Francis, The Mirror of Perfection, trans. Robert Steele (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1951), pp. 388-389.

absurdity of calling the Sun "his" brother and the Moon "his" sister, whereas Francis calls them Brother and Sister as members of their different natural or religious orders, similar to his own but owing direct obedience to God, like the members of his own Order.

All human society for Francis, as for all other medieval men, was divided into orders, spiritual or secular, according to their vocations, trades and callings, and they followed the rules and restrictions of their guilds, trades or feudal allegiances. Nothing was more repugnant to the medieval mind than a man without a guild or an Order or a feudal lord, who was responsible for him. Francis assumed that all creatures were equally in "Orders" and he approached them according to their "Obedience" and their "Rules."

While one cannot derive a full theological system from a paean of praise, certain significant conclusions can be drawn. The key to grasping the theological significance of the natural for St. Francis is found at the very end of the hymn. Here St. Francis' Christian convictions centered in a soteriological frame of reference allow him to rejoice that in all of nature and in natural death itself no harm can come to man since for the Christian "the second death" (damnation) shall not work him harm. Here death has lost its sting and nature its threat to man's existence. Man can, therefore, embrace both rejoicingly for he can now see that all of the creation is the gift of the gracious Creator. The panorama of the natural order running the gamut from the subhuman creatures to time itself was to be received by man without hesitation or reluctance. This was Christian nature, and this was God's redeemed time which presented itself to Francis.[1]

Such a sense of the integrity and positive value to be found in nature can be witnessed in the decorations of the basilica of San Francesco in Assisi. Painted there by the thirteenth-century artists Cimabue and Giotto, the frescos blend the realities of nature into the very composition itself. Gone is the older golden background symbolizing eternity, and instead one finds the natural landscape, the birds and animals, and closer attention to a naturalistic portrayal of the human figure.[2] These frescos witness to a sudden outburst of joy in the natural so typical of the mendicant saint. Here in the life and ministry of St. Francis is to be seen the conviction that nature and time are redeemed, and nature assumes a role of importance unknown before in the western Christian tradition.[3] At last in

---

[1] See P. Hilarin Felder, *Die Ideale des hl. Franziskus von Assisi* (Paderborn: Druch und Verlag von Ferdinand Schöningh, 1924), p. 423f.: "Nicht die Vorzüge der Naturdinge an sich, noch das Naturell des heiligen Franziskus, sondern seine überwältigende Gottesliebe ist als Quellgrund seiner Naturliebe zu betrachten."

[2] See Charles R. Morey, *Medieval Art* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1942), pp. 156, 160, 171, 333, 334.

[3] The pivotal importance of the figure of St. Francis deserves considerably more emphasis than is usually accorded it in western cultural history and in the handbooks of history of Christian doctrine. It is regrettable that the scholarly works on Francis tend to lose the significance of this emphasis on the natural by treating it as a type of "nature mysticism." Cf. Paul Sabatier, *Vie de S. Francois d'Assise* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1931); Johannes Jörgensen, *St. Francis of Assisi*, trans. T. O. Sloane (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1912). What they have failed to see is the soteriological point from which Francis views the natural world. In both works there is more exegesis of a late nineteenth century nature romanticism than is there a recovery of the actual theological conviction of St. Francis. In the direction of a corrective, see Harold Goad, *Greyfriars: The Story of Francis and His Followers* (London: John Westhouse, 1947).

Christian thought and life man has discovered a sense of relationship with nature and time which has freed him to give rightful attention to the "world." Man could now take nature unto himself and live within it as part of God's good creation. In fact, man could see that nature joined with him in praise of a common Creator and Redeemer. The possibility was now before man to fulfill the Genesis injunction to exercise control over the _saeculum_. With this spirited enthusiasm the Franciscans gave new emphasis to the _saeculum_ as the realm in which to realize the laws of the Kingdom of God without compromise.[1] While their enthusiasm may have led them to attempt the impossible, this should not blind modern eyes to see the positive advance made through the humble beginnings of St. Francis.

The figure of St. Francis and his embracing of the natural cannot be properly viewed apart from the tides of culture flowing in other dimensions of life at the opening of the medieval period. An assessment of the "secular" in Christian thought would, however, be most inadequate without a due recognition of how these tides were in dynamic operation within the Christian Church itself. St. Francis and his influence show vividly one of the many breakthroughs into a new age.

5. Thomas Aquinas: Nature and Grace

In medieval thought the theological understanding of the "world" was essentially couched within a spatial framework of the realm of nature and the realm of grace. The contrast between nature and grace was strongly developed by Augustine, not only as was seen in the contrast of the "two cities," but particularly in the vigorous expression found in the controversy with the British monk, Pelagius and his followers. The result of this controversy as far as Augustine was concerned amounted to a rejection of the order of nature as a massa perditionis, corrupt and doomed to distruction. Divine providence amounted actually to the protection and guidance of the church. Charles R. Raven points to Augustine's opposing spheres of nature and grace, the world and eternity:

---

[1] See Karlmann Beyschlag, _Die Bergpredigt und Franz von Assisi_ (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1955), particularly the section dealing with "Weltliche Ordnungen bei Franz und Jesus," pp. 209f.

> With the breakdown of civilization hope had been transferred from the world to the church, and from this world to the next. When the kingdom came it would be by miracle and with fire. The earth and all that it contained would be utterly consumed.[1]

The great Dominicans, Albert of Cologne and Thomas Aquinas, attempted to diminish the sharpness of the antithesis between nature and grace. While trying to avoid the extremes both of Pelagianism and Augustinianism, the Schoolmen actually reflected the influence of them both. While the antithesis was softened, the scholastic theology was in general agreement with the basic space-structure of Augustinian theology. In spite of significant differences, nevertheless, scholastic theologians worked within the basic structure, wherein the important contrast was still between grace and nature.[2]

---

[1] Charles R. Raven, Science and Religion (Cambridge: University Press, 1953), p. 52.

[2] See Philip S. Watson, The Concept of Grace (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 80.

Thomas Aquinas inherited a historical situation within western Christendom which did not lend itself to a hasty and premature union of nature and grace, reason and revelation. Neither of the roads taken by Boethius or Anselm of Canterbury were options by the time of the thirteenth century. It was Boethius who had formulated the principle *fidem rationemque coninunge*. Actually, in Boethius it was not a matter of "joining faith with reason" so much as showing that reason independently held to the same tenets as did faith. Man's natural reason was capable of discovering the truths contained within biblical revelation without resorting to biblical revelation as such. This is seen in Boethius' tractate on the Trinity[1] wherein he discusses the doctrine without a single scriptural citation. "Logic and analysis is all."[2] This concern with the conjoining of reason and faith earmarked the scholastic attempt to bring together nature and grace. Thomas Aquinas was the inheritor of the problem rather than the recipient of a solution.

Two hundred years before Thomas, Anselm of Canterbury had insisted in his mystical theology[3] that the content of Christian dogma so completely concurred with natural reason that it could be proved on

---

1. Boethius, *Utrum Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus de Trinitate substantialiter praedicentur*, in Migne, *Patrologiae*, Latinae tomus LXIV, 1299-1312.
2. Josef Pieper, *Scholasticism: Personalities and Problems of Medieval Philosophy* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), p. 38.
3. While it is a controversial thesis that Anselm's theology should be termed "mystical," a careful reading of the *Proslogion* would indicate that Anselm is seeking for an understanding which lies between faith and vision, and surely the locus of this understanding is found in mystical contemplation. See A. Stolz, "Zur Theologie Anselms im *Proslogion*," *Catholica*, 2 (1933), 1-21.

compelling rational grounds by *rationes necessariae*.[1] Both approaches as found in Boethius and Anselm carried the possibilities of a secularization of the contents of faith, and Thomas Aquinas could not accept either as the model on which to proceed. Already the tendencies in such a direction were afoot in the work of such circles as those gathered around the Hohenstaufen Emperor, Frederick II, and at the University of Naples where Thomas, himself, had studied under the Aristotelian, Peter of Hibernia.[2]

Thomas could not close his mind to the advances and claims of natural knowledge; his philosophical sophistication was too acute for this. On the other hand his commitment to the Church and the faith which it proclaimed was too potent to follow the Aristotelian tendencies uncritically. The task to which Thomas committed himself was that of joining the two -- theology and philosophy, the Bible and Aristotle, grace and nature. As Josef Pieper has pointed out,[3] the task of Thomas would of necessity involve two major considerations. First, the two realms would have to be conjoined in such a manner that their distinctiveness and relative autonomy would not be affected. Second, their essential unity would have to be guaranteed in such a fashion that one did not make his starting point either faith or reason, but one would have to go back to uncover an essential unity which undergirded both. To this task Thomas Aquinas set himself.

---

[1] One does not have to press the point of the "mystical" in Anselm to the radical degree of Stolz. See Stolz, *op. cit.* It would be fairer to Anselm to see his attempt as that of supplying a philosophical rationale for the mystical. This, however, does not lend support to the more recent thesis of Karl Barth to the effect that Anselm was in no sense offering a philosophical "proof" of the existence of God but rather was explicating the implications of the "divine name." See Karl Barth, *Fides quarerens intellectum*, trans. I. W. Robertson (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960). While Barth's argument has virtue in underscoring a possible starting point of Anselm's position, the ontological argument is nevertheless a kind of "natural theology," in spite of Barth's noble attempt to say otherwise.

[2] Josef Pieper, *Guide to Thomas Aquinas*, trans. R. and C. Winston (New York: Mentor-Omega Books, 1964), pp. 106-107.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

Nature, Thomas intrepidly affirmed, was the whole of natural reality, both in regards to that which was external and objective to man and also within man. It was this which brought forth the charges of "worldliness" of thought against Thomas. Thomas responded:

> It is, therefore, evident that the opinion is false of those who asserted that it made no difference to the truth of the faith what anyone holds about creatures, so long as one thinks rightly about God, as Augustine tells us in his book _On the Origin of the Soul_. For error concerning creatures, by subjecting them to causes other than God, spills over into false opinion about God, and takes men's minds away from Him, to whom faith seeks to lead them.[1]

At another point Thomas attacks this same charge of the conservative theologians of the day by analyzing the scriptural understanding of "the world." In his commentary on the Gospel of John he delineates three biblical meanings of the term "world." "World" and "creation" are at points used synonomously. In the New Testament, particularly in Pauline and Johannine materials, "the world" is the "new creation." In both cases "the world" is a positive biblical concept. On the other hand "world" is also used in a pejorative sense. When through sin the original creation is inverted, this too is the "world," but a distinction must be made between this and the original creation. If this distinction is not made, and Thomas claims that such a distinction is biblical, then one will conclude by affirming the opposite of the biblical doctrine of the goodness of the creation.[1]

---

[1] Thomas Aquinas, _Summa contra gentiles_, II, 3, 7, trans. James F. Anderson (New York: Image Books, 1956).

Thomas' concern with the preservation of the positive sense of the "world" or the "natural" is further seen in another argument in which he insists that the soul united with the body is more akin to the "likeness of God" than a soul separated from the body.

> The soul united with the body is more like God than the soul separated from the body because it (the soul in the body) possesses its nature in more complete fashion.[2]

The conclusion of such an argument would indicate that for Thomas evil is not to be equated with the "natural," i.e., with "corporeality."

In the discussion of virtues in the *Summa theologica* Thomas insists that "unsensuality," not sensuality, is a moral deficiency.[3] Anger can be good as well as bad.[4] Sexuality is unquestionably good. The touchstone of the argument is: ". . . what belongs to the nature of man is neither taken from him nor given to him by reason of sin."[5] Thus Thomas spoke of nature.

---

[1] Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 1, 5.

[2] Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei*, 5, 10.

[3] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, II, 142, 1; 152, 2; 153, 3, in *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Anton C. Pegis, ed. (New York: Random House, 1945).

[4] *Ibid.*, II, 23, 1; 23, 3; I, 81, 2.

[5] *Ibid.*, I, 98, 2.

In distinction from Augustine, Thomas refused to allow nature and grace to permeate each other. The irony of Augustine's attempt was that nature and grace did permeate each but to such an extent that nature was considered in a pejorative light. This in essence created a clear division between nature and grace. Thomas saw his clue to the solution to lie in a hierarchy of being wherein nature and grace would complement each other. Grace did not contradict or annihilate nature, but it enriched and completed nature. Nature and grace were related to each other as "promise to fulfillment"[1] or in the Aristotelian categories which Thomas employed, nature and grace were related as "potentiality" is related to "actuality." Grace or revelation does not contradict the "light of nature" but actually the former completes the latter. That which Greek philosophy, and particularly Aristotle, had discovered about the nature of the cosmos was never to be abandoned, but Christian theology was to rest securely on top of this and thereby was to give it deeper meaning than the Greeks had ever supposed. _Gratia naturam non tollit, sed perficit_. In this manner Thomas attempted to complete his task of unifying the two realms or by creating what others called "the Christian synthesis."

This "synthesis" was balanced with Thomas' theological anthropology serving as a pivot for the entire structure. A distinction had to be made between _natura_ and _techne_, i.e., between nature and art, between the natural and the human. Casuality controls the ends of nature whereas will and purpose are the marks of the anthropos. This was the classic Aristotelian distinction which was necessary to make man the creative creature within the context of the natural world. If man were only a body, then he could be spoken of as a part of nature without qualification, but man was also will and intellect. It is the latter which becomes the vehicle of grace within nature.

---

[1] Richard Kroner, _Speculation and Revelation in the Age of Christian Philosophy_ (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 190.

Man is, therefore, the reality which exists between nature and grace participating in both. In this way Thomas sought to unify the whole structure. The intellect knows principles naturally, and from such knowledge in man comes the knowledge of conclusions which are not known naturally, but by discovery or by teaching.[1] Thomas attempted in this fashion to fulfill the first task of his "synthesis" -- the task of conjoining the two realms in such a manner that their distinctiveness and relative autonomy would not be affected.

The second requirement was the more difficult one. While the two realms should have a relative autonomy, their essential unity would at the same time have to be affirmed. This essential unity would have to lie in a reality which undergirded both realms. In the first instance a dualism of distinctions was required. In the second instance a monism which would unify the duality was required. Thomas attempts the latter task through an explication of the doctrine of creation.[2] In creating the cosmos the God of pure unity distinguishes both logically and actually the world from himself. Existing outside the mind of God,

---

1. Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologica, I, 60, 2.
2. See Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra gentiles, II, 15-31.

nature is potentiality. It is only through God that nature can become actuality. Nature, therefore, has a degree of autonomy or independence and at the same time requires God for it to reach its completion. Since God created the cosmos *ex nihilo*, there is nothing which exists which does not exist through the will and intellect of God. The whole philosophical question of multiplicity in unity is solved by Thomas through this approach to the doctrine of creation. In this fashion Thomas sought to supply the "monism" which was required as the ground for the "dualism."

This whole "synthesis" was possible only from the premise of the Aristotelian "hierarchy." Thomas added another story or super-space to Aristotle's house, and this super-space had the effect of "remodeling" the lower space. For Thomas Aristotle's Pure Form required the structure of grace for it to become actuality. In this fashion Thomas sought to join for all time in inseparable relation theology and philosophy, the Bible and Aristotle, grace and nature.

When Thomas returned to the University of Paris in 1268, he found himself attacked from all sides. Siger of Brabant and his disciples possessed an unbridled enthusiasm for the possibilities of the philosophical quest unaided by theology.[1] Thomas' position of "synthesis" was for them the appropriate target. On the other side from entirely different presuppositions John Peckham and Bonaventura defended the "orthodox" position against Thomas' theological "worldliness." During this chaotic period Thomas wrote the voluminous *Quaestiones disputatae* on evil, on the virtues, on the Incarnation and completed the second part of the *Summa theologica*. These writings from this heightened polemical period of Thomas' career serve as a summary statement of his whole position. Several points can be summarized relevant to the Thomistic perspective on the world from his last period of productivity.

---

[1] While the "Latin Averroism" was not as pronounced in Siger as in his disciples, the pronounced tendency towards the doctrine of "double truth" and the disjoining of faith and reason were inherently part and parcel of Siger's attacks upon Thomas. See P. Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et l'averoisme latin au XIIIème Siècle* (Louvain: Institut supérieur de philosophie de l'Université, 1908-1911).

(1) Thomas continued to insist that the natural world and man as a part of that world could legitimately be posited only on the ground which had already established. The unity and the plurality of the world could be held only on the basis of what he had already outlined as an adequate doctrine of creation. Thomas insisted upon the relative autonomy of the natural and its ultimate dependence upon the supernatural structure of grace.

(2) Nature was good because it was in its essential character *creatura*. In other words, the goodness of the natural was rooted in the fact of its being the creation of God. Regardless of the fact of sin, nature was not *essentially* changed. Thomas, therefore, succeeds in "softening" the Augustinian position. Man is not the enemy of nature because neither man nor nature is as distorted and disrupted by sin as Augustine had envisioned. In short, the Thomistic "synthesis" did not view man as having plunged as deeply into a disruption with God and nature, and, therefore, natural man as well as Christian man had a more assertive role to play as a co-partner with the Creator in the natural order.

While Thomas accepted the Augustinian distinction between nature and grace and worked within that framework, there are several distinctions which should be made between the two figures. Thomas wrote in a period when the term "Christendom" had definite content and meaning. In distinction from the period of Augustine there was, relatively speaking, a Christian culture. This may account more than any other factor for the so-called "softening" of the Augustinian dichotomy between the two realms. In so far as there was a common "Christendom" at this time and in so far as there was a degree of cohesiveness of the institutions of society which tended to hold man's natural or secular involvements in a unitary whole, the Thomistic "synthesis" can be viewed as a happy solution to the relationship between the "secular" and the "sacred," nature and grace. This, however, was a unity built upon the conditions of the culture of the time and not a unity found within the structure of the Christian faith itself. The very fact that "Latin Averroism," centered in the University of Paris, was already busily making sharp divisions between faith and reason, theology and philosophy and pointing towards a blatant assertion of the doctrine of "double truth" indicated that even within its own time the Thomistic "synthesis" was beginning to show cracks which every theological system built upon a cultural condition will invariably manifest. As a religious _Weltanschauung_, which Thomism claimed to be, the "synthesis" was actually a manifestation of "cultural religion." The Thomistic "synthesis" was built on a reality called "Christendom," and when this reality no longer existed, the "synthesis" itself ceased to be a synthesis. The two realms would simply tend to go in opposed directions without the social reality necessary for cohesiveness. The breakdown of this social reality cannot be explained without serious qualifications as the work of the Reformation or the Renaissance; what must be seen is that the seeds of such a breakdown were already implicit in the synthesis itself.[1]

Care must be exercised, however, that the modern viewpoint does not lead to a wholesale rejection of the medieval viewpoint. Medieval theology was not equipped to possess the same viewpoint of the "world" as the modern theologian. R. Guardini's cautious statement is helpful:

> The sole criterion by which an age can be rightly measured is the question: How far in it does the fullness of human existence expand to and attain a genuine meaningfulness? This occurred in the Middle Ages in a manner which associates it with the greatest periods of history.[2]

---

[1] It seems sociologically and theologically naïve to insist as does the modern Thomist, Josef Pieper, that there occurred at a "particular moment" what is known as "Western Christendom" which is "something exemplary, a paradigm and model, a standard which 'really ought' to be met." The principle which lies at the core of this cultural phenomenon is the Thomistic synthesis. "We cannot manage . . . to live consistently against the principle which expresses the essence of the Christian West." See Pieper, Guide to Thomas Aquinas, pp. 117-118.

[2] R. Guardini, Das Ende der Neuzeit (Basel: Hess Verlag, 1950), p. 34. Still, it must be brought to attention that the medieval thinkers had more with which to work than manifested itself in their summa. H. R. Schlette, Die Nichtigkeit der Welt: Der philosophische Horizont des Hugo von St. Viktor (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1961), p. 100, suggests that medieval theology was permeated with a dualistic conception of the world despite the fact that the biblical basis of a Heilsgeschichte (creation, redemption, consummation) was always available. Schlette further warns: "Despite the dogmatic correctness of the content of the Christian faith, in practical life and in the world-understanding an existential way of life may prevail, which -- under Gnostic or Neoplatonic influence -- may totally deny this life and world and prefer that they did not exist at all." See Schlette, ibid., p. 160.

Both Augustine and Thomas accepted the concept of the "dual ethic," but on the grounds of different philosophical traditions. The philosophical antecedent of Augustinianism was Greek Platonism; the philosophical antecedent of Thomism was Greek Aristotelianism. Once again, however, the "dual ethic," as in the case of the nature/grace dichotomy, was softened in Thomas in comparison with Augustine. In this respect, Thomas was probably more philosophically and theologically in line with the form which this "dual ethic" took in Clement of Alexandria.[1] When Christian thought accepted a "dual ethic" and posited its preference for the monastic life of withdrawal from secular involvement such a preference had certain affinities with the characteristic Greek preference for contemplation. Christian theology, however, could not accept the Greek metaphysical preference for a detached observation, speculative imagination and metaphysical intuition without certain adjustments. Greek contemplation had to be "activated" and "moralized," for within the biblical perspective man was not simply intellect but he was conscience which included knowledge, trust and love. This is seen vividly in Clement's espousal of the "Christian Gnostic," wherein contemplation and love were conjoined in the highest form of life.[2]

Thomas follows Clement with the aid of Aristotelian categories.

---

1. See J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 179-180, for a brief but excellent discussion of Clement's "ethical stages."
2. See John E. Steely, Gnosis: The Doctrine of Christian Perfection in the Writings of Clement of Alexandria, unpublished thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 1957. See also, Wilhelm Wagner, op. cit.

For Aristotle the dianoetical virtues of intellect culminated in _theoria_ or contemplation, and this in turn produced the highest virtue, _sophia_, wisdom. Apparently, Thomas means the same when he writes:

> A virtue takes its species from its object. Hence, speaking absolutely, that virtue is more excellent which has the more excellent object. Now it is evident that the object of reason is more excellent than the object of appetite, since the reason apprehends things in the universal, while the appetite tends to things whose _being_ is restricted to the particular. Consequently, speaking absolutely, the intellectual virtues, which perfect the reason, are more excellent than the moral virtues, which perfect the appetite.[1]

Whatever else this may indicate, it is apparent that Thomas joins with Clement and with Aristotle in affirming that there is a preferable higher mode of existence which is contemplation. This is the philosophical justification for the life of poverty, celibacy and obedience. There is a higher life, the monastic life, the life of withdrawal from the secular.

The so-called "softening" on the part of Thomas of the "dual ethic" was due to a change in the cultural situation. By Thomas' time the Church was not only in the "city of earth" but in a very real sense the Church was the "custodian" of the "city of earth."[2] This is a marked difference from the relationship of Church and world in Augustine's day. This represents what Niebuhr called the situation for a "remarkable practical synthesis."[3] In Augustine's day monasticism was a reaction against the secular world. In Thomas' day the secular is gathered into the Church,[1] and monastic life represents a higher rung of the ethical hierarchy. Once again, the question has to be raised: Without the cultural phenomenon of "Christendom," can this adjusted "dual ethic," in Thomism, succeed in doing anything but rendering an unacceptable dichotomy between the religious and the secular, life above this world and life in this world?

---

[1] Thomas Aquinas, _Summa theologica_, II, 66, 3.

[2] See Denys Hay, _The Medieval Centuries_ (London: Methuen and Co., Lts., 1953), pp. 58-77.

[3] Niebuhr, _op. cit._, p. 129.

The most serious objection to the Thomistic "synthesis" must be raised from the understanding of history which it presupposes. Following in the tradition of Augustine, Thomas accepts the static pattern of Greek rationalism while again it should be noted that the specific Greek traditions of the two were different -- one Platonic and the other Aristotelian. In both traditions the rationalistic attempt to impose a philosophical concept of cosmic order on the universe and on history actually led to a deactivation of history and an attempt to hold history in check. The clash between two ways of viewing the world and history, mentioned previously, comes to full force in Thomas. For the biblical man history was a dynamic linear movement from creation through Christ to a consummation. The world and history were principally the same. On the other hand, for the Greek philosopher the world was space, and history occurred within the world. The medieval synthesis in Thomas Aquinas resolved the tension between Greek and Hebrew by making the world of "grace" a spatially higher or religious one and the changing world of history the lower or "secular" one. History lost its dynamic tempestuousness in favor of a philosophical quest for order in the cosmos. The biblical assertion that all of life is drawn under God into history lost its dynamic thrust in the medieval synthesis. In spite of his so-called "worldliness" in theology and philosophy, Thomas Aquinas succeeds even more than Augustine in bringing about a temporary eclipse of a view of history, time and *saeculum*, which could give full theological appreciation to the "secular." This is borne out practically in that from the time of Thomas to the present day the term "secularization" carries a very specialized meaning. It designates the movement of a monastic priest to parish responsibility. The term has wider reference today in that it designates a division of spiritual and secular institutions and the gradual encroachment of the "secular" upon the "religious" domain.[1] Unfortunately, rather than resolving the tension, in the medieval synthesis the possibility for tension has actually been heightened. The "secular" apart from the church, i.e., Christendom, has fallen from "grace," and the lines of battle are drawn between two competing forces for man's allegiance. The price for such a division was great, perhaps too great, in that man had been called to fight the wrong fight on the wrong front and to take temporary consolation in having won the wrong victory!

---

[1] This attempt to subsume the "secular" under the domination of the church has led some modern Roman Catholic scholars to refer to this as a "repeat performance" of the Monophysitic heresy. See The Christian and the World (New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons, 1965), pp. 8-9, 75. "No other age was able to achieve to the same degree a blending of the terrestrial and heavenly kingdoms into a single universal order in which the temporal realms were directly ordered to the spiritual reality of the Church, and even -- in order to maintain this order -- directly or at least indirectly subjugated to ecclesiastical regulation. This unitary order necessarily resulted in a situation in which temporal matters were not adequately considered with respect to their inherent value nor sufficiently seen as fashioned according to their own laws. In the long run, the sacred order of the Middle Ages amounted to the same thing as Monophysitism." Alfons Auer, "The Changing Character of the Christian Understanding of the World," ibid., pp. 8-9.

---

[1] S. Reicke, "Säkularisation," *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Band V (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1961), 1280-1288. Also, G. Dickel, "Säkularisation," *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon*, hrs. Heinz Brunotte und Otto Weber (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1959), pp. 764-768.

D. The "Secular" in Protestant Theology

The reformers, Martin Luther and John Calvin, share with the great figures of the pre-reformation period, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, three fundamental convictions of faith or theological tenets regarding the "world" or the "secular." Together they insisted upon a distinction between nature and grace, but the reformers' understanding of the secular significance of the "call" or vocation made the dual ethic of Catholocism _passe_. The leaders of both periods emphasized the central doctrine of the sovereignty of God over the world, i.e., over the _saeculum_. Nevertheless, the reformers departed from what has been called the ecclesiastical form of the Monophysitic heresy by attempting to give the "world" a relative degree of autonomy to be the "world." And finally, they both agreed that the _saeculum_, including its activities and institutions, was to be viewed as a mixed phenomenon of good and evil. The recasting of these theological convictions in the particular shape of Protestant thought opened new avenues of approach to the "secular." The breakdown of medieval Christendom provided, likewise, a new existential situation in which it became imperative that new answers to the old question be formulated. To this re-formulation

Luther and Calvin gave considerable attention.

1. Martin Luther: The Two Realms

The concept of the world in Luther's theological perspective is "part and parcel" of Luther's doctrine of the two realms. Yet Luther's doctrine of the two realms or kingdoms or regiments has caused no small amount of controversy within the twentieth century. The controversy has centered mostly upon Luther's understanding of secular government and the church's relationship to secular authority. This controversy has been intense in the twentieth century, particularly during and following the Second World War. This was due to the differing opinions held by German Lutherans on the interpretation of this doctrine during the days of National Socialism. Actually, the confusion in interpretation existed long before the Second World War.

It seemed to men such as Lord Acton that Luther ascribed such unlimited power to the secular powers that he laid the foundations for despotism. "The notion of liberty, whether civil or religious, was hateful to his despotic nature, and contrary to his interpretation of Scripture."[1] In fact, even the American Lutheran, J. L. Neve, praised Luther in this respect: ". . . the separation of Church and State belongs to the most significant steps of the Lutheran reformation."[2] To the contrary, J. N. Figgis found that Luther did not make such a sharp distinction between the sacred and the secular and in this lay the root of the whole problem.

---

[1] Lord J. E. D. Acton, History of Freedom (London: Hollis and Carter, 1962), p. 156.

[2] J. L. Neve, Churches and Sects of Christendom (Blair, Nebraska: Lutheran Publishing House, 1944), p. 215.

> Luther, in fact, refuses to make that sharp distinction of sacred and secular so characteristic of the Latin world; and paves the way for the exalted theory of the State entertained by Hegel and his followers.[1]

Strangely, from another perspective Ernst Troeltsch maintained that in reality Luther belonged to the age from which he had emerged, i.e., medieval Christendom, and that Luther's view of the _saeculum_ was in essence simply a variation on the old medieval theme of the _corpus christianum_.[2] G. von Below saw a radical separation between the sacred and the secular:

> It was Luther who accomplished the true deliverance of the State; he achieved it by removing the differentiation between ecclesiastically good works and worldly activities and by limiting religion and the Church to their proper sphere.[3]

How can it be that from Luther's premise of a distinction between spiritual and temporal authority, there could arise such vexing confusion? Nils Ehrenstrom is unquestionably correct: "In spite of the fact that all schools of thought make a common appeal to the principles of the Lutheran Reformation, there is _no_ consensus on the question of

---

1. J. N. Figgis, _Studies of Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius, 1414-1625_ (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), p. 59.
2. Ernst Troeltsch, _Protestantism and Progress: A Historical Study of the Relation of Protestantism to the Modern World_, trans. W. Montgomery (Boston: Beacon Press, 1912), pp. 28-29.
3. G. von Below, _Die Bedeutung der Reformation für die politische Entwicklung_ (Dresden: Teubner, 1918), p. 8.

what actually constitutes the genuine Lutheran conception of the State!"[1] Where does one turn to find a way out of this impasse?[2]

It is regrettable that so many of the analyses and critiques of Luther's understanding of the two kingdoms have centered exclusively upon the issue of the state and have grown out of the historical frustrations of modern times. These approaches to Luther have been for the most part from a political or social perspective and have tended to obscure the fact that what Luther had to say about the two kingdoms was fundamentally a theological issue. Gordon Rupp is unquestionably correct:

> No teaching of Luther has been more misrepresented than his teaching about the nature, extent, and limits of temporal power. Partly this has been due to an attempt to bypass Luther's theology.[3]

Contrary to Troeltsch[4] that which Luther held in common with the Middle

---

[1] Nils Ehrenstrom, *Christian Faith and the Modern State* (Chicago: Willett, Clark and Company, 1937), p. 91.

[2] The influence of the following studies is to be noted in this chapter though not always explicitly mentioned: Gunnar Hillerdal, *Gehorsam gegen Gott und Menschen: Luthers Lehre von der Obrigkeit und die moderne evangelische Staatsethik* (Stockholm: SKDB, 1955); Franz Lau, "Luthers Lehre von den beiden Reichen," *Luthertum*, VIII (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1953); Gordon Rupp, *The Righteousness of God* (London: Hodder, 1953), Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957); Gustaf Törnvall, *Andligt och världsligt regemente hos Luther* (Lund: Ohlsson, 1940); and Anders Nygren, "Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms," *The Ecumenical Review*, I, No. 3 (1949), 301-310.

[3] Rupp, *op. cit.*, p. 287. See also, Gerhard Ebeling, "The Necessity of the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms," in *Word and Faith*, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1963), pp. 386-406, where a similar argument is made giving, however, more emphasis to the theological motif of "law and gospel."

[4] See above.

Ages was his desire to bring the totality of life in all its secular manifestations into an interpretative framework which was theological, or more specifically, theocentric.[1] The real genius in Luther at this point lay in that he could stress the worldliness of the world without impairing the majesty of God. In fact, apart from the Lutheran emphasis on the sovereignty of God over the world, the doctrine of the two realms (to say nothing of the doctrine of vocation) would be grossly distorted. It was Luther's intention to show that whether man in his secular engagements acknowledged God or not, nevertheless, these secular structures had a theological or theocentric foundation.

The securing of such foundations was not as facile a task as Thomas Aquinas had envisioned. The problem of the sovereignty of God over history and over man's secular authority was at the outset greater in Luther than in Thomas precisely because of the deeper understanding which Luther had of the nature of human sin. It was Luther's view that one aspect of sin was man's perversion of this authority. This Luther saw to be the case with the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. Luther's convictions about the secular engagements of man were firmly rooted in the theological Grundlage of theocentricity. From this perspective he criticized the perversion of authority in the Church and tried to show positively the secular implications of the acts of a sovereign God in history. Faith in the sovereignty of God had direct implications for man's worldly responsibilities; theology was not arid abstraction. Luther's views, therefore, on justification by faith, eschatology, and the demonic provide the proper context for understanding man's place in the saeculum, the relation of the two kingdoms, and man's "calling."

---

[1] The rebirth of Lutheran research in the twentieth century has emphasized this character of Luther's whole thought. The Lundensian school is particularly emphatic in this respect. See Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, trans. A. G. Hebert (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953); Hillerdal, *op. cit.*; and Törnvall, *op. cit.* It is therefore, to predetermine the outcome of the argument (to say nothing about distorting the man's thought!) to begin one's treatment of Luther by determining his understanding of the church and his understanding of the state without first ascertaining his proper theological starting point. In so many ways a noteworthy work, William A. Mueller's *Church and State in Luther and Calvin* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), suffers from this type of artificial approach.

a) Peccator et justus

The genius of Luther's attempt to recover a proper theological understanding of the secular is due in most part to his return to biblical categories, the biblical conception of time and history, and the interpretation of the words of Jesus within this framework. The distinctions between nature and grace which Luther made were not grounded in the metaphysics of Plato or Aristotle where nature was disparaged in favor of grace as in Augustine or where nature functioned as propaedeutic for grace as in Thomas. Rather the two, nature and grace, had an independence and yet a fundamental unity. Luther saw an emphasis on the two sides of one unitary existence over which reigned the sovereign God[1] when Jesus spoke of the contrast between the two kingdoms of God and the world, the things of God and the things of

---

[1] Luther here stands in contrast with Augustine, to whom he owes so much on many counts, in that where Augustine identified his "kingdom" with groups of people, Luther views the matter more dynamically and refers to the two kingdoms as forms of actions or orders.

Caesar. When Luther exegeted the Sermon on the Mount the predominating conviction of the sovereignty of God forbade him to place the wrath and love of God exclusively upon the citizens of the Kingdom, but rather, he saw those who were not members of the Kingdom were still related to the sovereign God in the wider kingdom of creation over which the same God reigned.[1]

The actual distinction which Luther made is between those who are justified by faith and those who are not.

> . . . the first belong to the kingdom of God, the second to the kingdom of the world. Those who belong to the kingdom of God are all the true believers who are in Christ and under Christ, for Christ is King and Lord in the kingdom of God. . . Now observe, these people need no temporal law or sword. If all the world were composed of real Christians, that is, true believers, there would be no need for or benefits from prince, king, lord, sword, or law. . . .
>
> All who are not Christians belong to the kingdom of the world and are under the law. There are few true believers, and still fewer who live a Christian life, who do not resist evil and indeed themselves do no evil. For this reason God has provided them a different government beyond the Christian estate and the kingdom of God. He has subjected them to the sword so that, even though they would like to, they are unable to practice their wickedness, and if they do practice it they cannot do so without fear or with success and impunity.[2]

The "orders" or "regiments" of creation are necessary and are the institutions of the sovereign God in man's secular life because

---

1. Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount," in Luther's Works, 21, ed. and trans. Jaroslav Pelikan (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956), 147-148.
2. Luther, "Temporal Authority," Luther's Works, 45, ed. Walther I. Brandt, trans. J. J. Schindel, 75-130.

man is sinful. The secular life is made up of these "orders" in which people hold "offices." These orders are arranged in a series consisting of family, vocation, schooling, etc., and reach their apex in secular government.[1] These "orders" or secular powers are what Luther termed "the left hand of God." In this fashion Luther distinguishes between the two kingdoms. Some scholars have claimed that this distinction is too clean-cut. After all, empirically speaking, is there a person who can claim to live so completely in the Kingdom of God as to be relieved of any secular involvement? Luther would hardly have claimed so. For Luther salvation depended upon justification by faith, and the one who is justus is still peccator. Perhaps this is an unresolved tension in Luther for in his treatise on "Temporal Authority" he not only distinguishes the two kingdoms but goes further to show the mixed character of the Christian's life:

> Certainly it is true that Christians, so far as they themselves are concerned, are subject neither to law nor sword, and have need of neither. But take heed and first fill the world with real Christians before you attempt to rule it in a Christian or evangelical manner. This you will never accomplish; for the world and the masses are and always will be unchristian, even if they are all baptized and Christian in name. Christians are few and far between (as the saying is).[2]

While the dualism between the two kingdoms may be clearly drawn in Luther's thought, the dualism is in no sense absolute. That which is absolute is the sovereignty of God over both spheres. This is particularly stressed in his treatise on "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved":

---

[1] For Luther, even the empirical church was an "order."

[2] Luther, ibid., p. 91.

> For He (God) has established two kinds of government among men. The one is spiritual; it has no sword, but it has the Word, by means of which men are to become good and righteous, so that with this righteousness they may attain everlasting life. This righteousness He administers through the Word, which he has committed to the preachers. The other is worldly government, through the sword, which aims to keep peace among men, and this He rewards with temporal blessing. For He gives to rulers so much property, honor, and power, to be possessed by them above others, in order that they may serve Him by administering this righteousness. Thus God Himself is the founder, lord, master, protector, and rewarder of both kinds of righteousness. There is no human ordinance or authority in either, but each is altogether a divine thing.[1]

In contrast to the Thomistic "synthesis" which made the classic distinction between nature and grace and built this distinction into a structure with "lower" and "upper" spaces, Luther held these modes separately and claimed them both as instruments of God's activity. This distinction between the two kingdoms and the claim that they are both activities of the sovereign God parallels the other classic Lutheran distinction: the distinction between law and gospel, both of which are activities of the sovereign and saving God.[2]

b) Regnum diaboli

The fact that the two realms find themselves frequently in conflict does not refute the sovereignty of God but points to another factor which must also be given account. This factor is what Luther termed the "demonic," the recognition of which has led in modern Lutheran

---

1. Luther, "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved," *Works of Martin Luther*, V, trans. Charles M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1931), 39.
2. Törnvall, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-172. See also, Ebeling, *op. cit.* 395-405.

research to be described as "Luther's dualism."[1] God's sovereign will is constantly under attack within the secular kingdom. Gustaf Aulén, a modern Lutheran, points to this fact:

> History is not an evolution towards a perfection within the boundaries of this world and this time. But on the other hand it is far from meaningless. It has the deepest meaning, because it is a drama where God's agape fights against the evil forces opposed to the will of God.[2]

In interpreting Luther to the modern mind, Aulén in another work writes:

> Man is placed in a vast conflict between the two powers: the Kingdom of God and the kingdom from below. The divine will contends with the hostile spiritual powers which tyrannize man.[3]

Because the secular realm is always under attack, the "orders" of this realm will always present an ambiguous appearance. They are under the sovereignty of God, and yet they can be employed by Satan. In his treatise "On War Against the Turk," Luther can describe the Turk as "God's rod and the devil's servant."[4] At best this is a picturesque description of the mixed character of worldly existence, but it is not free from many thorny theological problems. The clear recognition, however, of the mixed character of the secular prevented Luther from indulging in the Utopian dreams of the Anabaptists and other sectarian

---

1. Cf. Edgar M. Carlson, The Reinterpretation of Luther (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948), pp. 48-57. Also Ragnar Bring, Dualismen hos Luther (Stockholm: SKDB, 1929).
2. Gustaf Aulén, Church, Law and Society (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 12.
3. Aulen, The Faith of the Christian Church, trans. Eric H. Wahlstrom and G. Everett Arden (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), p. 244.
4. Luther, "On War Against the Turk," Works of Martin Luther, V, 88.

groups who felt that man could be disarmed and governments abandoned and the *saeculum* could become the Kingdom of God. For Luther there was a necessary distinction between the two realms which was theologically mandatory, and this theological mandate was rooted in the ambiguous nature of the *regnum mundi* itself. The *regnum mundi*, i.e., *saeculum*, is itself involved in a self-contradiction. It is an expression of the creatureliness of the world on the one hand, and at the same time it is the expression of the created turning towards itself and seeking to become autonomous which is another manner of expressing *secularism*.[1] The two-kingdom doctrine was theologically necessary for Luther, therefore, due to this self-contradiction in the world. This contradiction could for Luther be reconciled only by a consideration of eschatology.

c) *Regnum Christi*

Luther saw clearly that the contradiction between creatureliness and worldly autonomy could be reconciled only by emphasizing the Kingdom of Christ. Indeed, the two kingdom doctrine must be held for the sake of the Kingdom of Christ. Creation and consummation are necessary doctrines for a proper understanding of the *regnum mundi*, i.e., the *saeculum*. The *regnum mundi* can be spoken of by Luther as *diabolus*, *mors*, *peccatum*, *caro*, *ratio*, *opus*, *mores*, etc., all of which are opposed to *fides* because the creation has refused to be what it essentially is.[2] It has refused to understand itself as the creation of God. This amounts

---

1. See Luther, "Temporal Authority," *op. cit.*, p. 96.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

to saying that the creation refuses to understand itself in faith. It is then seen as being absolutely opposed to the *regnum Christi*, and in this sense the *regnum Christi* contradicts in an absolute sense the *regnum mundi*.

Yet the *regnum Christi* is at the same time an affirmation of the world for the world is still the creation of God. Indeed, the *regnum Christi* is the affirmation that the world can be itself again, i.e., world understood as creation. This affirmation of the Kingdom in the interim between creation and consummation is of the nature of *fides*, and therefore, until the advent of the Kingdom in power, i.e., until the consummation, the Christian must hold to the two kindgom doctrine.

While Luther did not explicate his theology in explicit terms of a *Heilsgeschichte*, it is quite obvious that he clearly attempted to hold in perspective the biblical conception of a linear history moving from creation to Christ to consummation, and the two kingdom doctrine could not be supported without this understanding of time and history. For Luther this understanding of history saved the Christian from utopian illusions since the complete "reign of Christ" would come only in a consummation beyond the limits of the historical continuum. Within historical existence the realms of the sacred and the secular must be seen as having a common source in the sovereign God, and their separation must be seen as rooted in the contradiction of the world as such. It is important, therefore, to note that both realms are under the reign of God; both kingdoms are really God's. It would be a misinterpretation of Luther to conclude that the "secular" is fundamentally the "profane" -- a realm apart from God's jurisdiction.

> The temporal is not foreign to God, and Luther does not regard it as such. To him there is nothing which is profane, and no sphere in which God is not at work.[1]

What is the practical consequence of this division between the two realms in Luther? It should be obvious that, for Luther, this division does not create an opportunity for the secular kingdom to be seen as an autonomous work of man, but the doctrine of the two realms is necessary theologically because of the misunderstanding on the part of the world which conceives itself as autonomous rather than as a creation. The Lutheran doctrine of vocation or calling is an attempt to answer the question of the Christian's mode of life "between the times" in this self-contradictory world and to elucidate the responsibilities of Christian and secular man alike in the _saeculum_. All of this is to be done without falling into the error of worldly autonomy.

d) _Vocatio_

The Lutheran attempt to answer the questions of existence in the _saeculum_ between the times involved the reformer in a rejection of the medieval dual ethic, and, therefore, he rejected the distinctions between "sacred" and "secular" callings. No calling was above another.

The Christian and the non-Christian both live in the same world and under the same "orders" or "regiments." Externally, the pattern of their behavior in this world may be very much alike since no one is exempt from the "orders" of creation. The difference lies in terms of the approach which each makes to the institutions of the secular order -- family, work, and state.

---

[1] Anders Nygren, "Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms," _The Ecumenical Review_, I, No. 3 (1949), 304.

> What you do in your house is worth as much as if you did it up in heaven for our Lord God. For what we do in our calling here on earth in accordance with His word and command He counts as if it were done in heaven for Him. . . . Therefore we should accustom ourselves to think of our position and work as sacred and well-pleasing to God, not on account of the word and faith from which the obedience and the work flow. No Christian should despise his position and life if he is living in accordance with the word of God, but should say, "I believe in Jesus Christ, and do as the ten commandments teach, and pray that our dear Lord God may help me thus to do." That is a right and holy life, and cannot be made holier even if one fast himself to death.
>
> However numerous and arduous they (vows of monkery and priesthood) may be, these works in God's sight are in no way whatever superior to a farmer laboring in the field, or a woman looking after her home. Rather all are measured by him by faith alone. . . . Indeed it occurs quite frequently that the common work of serving man or maid is more acceptable than all the fastings and other works of monks or priests where faith is lacking.[1]

Once again, the Lutheran theological scheme of law and gospel is to be seen. The non-Christian approaches the "orders" under the compulsion of law; the Christian approaches the same in the freedom of grateful love. The Christian knows himself justified by the sovereign God and is no longer under the constraints to prove his righteousness by works of the law. Luther describes the Christian's response in his "Treatise on Christian Liberty":

---

[1] Martin Luther, cited in Wolff, Reformation Writings of Martin Luther (London: Lutterworth Press, 1952), p. 276.

> Although the Christian is thus free from all works, he ought in this liberty to empty himself, to take upon himself the form of a servant, to be made in the likeness of men, to be found in fashion as a man, and to serve, help and in every way deal with his neighbor as he sees that God through Christ has dealt and still deals with himself. And this he should do freely, having regard to nothing except the divine approval. He ought to think: "Though I am an unworthy and condemned man, my God has given me in Christ all the riches of righteousness and salvation without any merit on my part, out of pure, free mercy, so that henceforth I need nothing whatever except faith which believes that this is true. Why should I not therefore freely, joyfully, with all my heart, and with an eager will, do all things which I know are pleasing and acceptable to such a Father, who has overwhelmed me with his inestimable riches? I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbor, just as Christ offered himself to me; I will do nothing in this life except what I see is necessary, profitable, and salutary to my neighbor, since through faith I have an abundance of all good things in Christ."[1]

Such constitutes and describes the Christian's Beruf, vocatio, or calling. Therefore, for the Christian there is no such thing as a "secular" vocation. On the other hand, the non-Christian, obeying under the compulsion of law and not from the motivation of the Gospel, does not find his life within the temporal "orders" a calling.

> As far as we can determine Luther does not use Beruf or vocatio in reference to the work of a non-Christian. All have station (Stand) and office; but Beruf is the Christian's earthly or spiritual work.[2]

The Christian may not need the law as expressed in the "orders" for his own personal existence, but within the world the Christian's concern is always oriented towards the welfare of the neighbor.

---

[1] Martin Luther, "Treatise on Christian Liberty," Works of Martin Luther, II, trans. W. A. Lambert, 337-338.

[2] Gustaf Wingren, Luther on Vocation, trans. Ross Mackenzie (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1954), p. 2.

> He serves the State as he performs all other works of love, which he himself does not need . . . but because others need it.[1]

Therefore, the Christian along with the secular man finds himself obeying the temporal orders but for different motivations. The Christian finds himself alongside the secular man in this respect seeking to check the inroads of evil and lawlessness, seeking to preserve the world. Despite the differences of approach to the temporal orders, the Christian and the secular man find themselves neighbors within the world for this is the external and social manifestation of the sovereignty of God over his world.[2]

It should be noted that Luther's eschatological views had much to do with determining his position regarding the Christian's submission to the temporal orders and powers. He was not without biblical precedent in this matter, for such was the case also with the Apostle Paul.[3] Both men saw the historical continuum nearing the end awaiting the final judgment and resurrection of the faithful.[4] There is no doubt that the actual historical circumstances coupled with a firm faith in a trans-historical consummation contributed to Luther's so-called "conservatism" at this point.

---

1. Martin Luther, "Temporal Authority," *op. cit.*, p. 91.
2. See Gustaf Wingren, *Creation and Law*, *trans.* Ross Mackenzie (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), pp. 149-162.
3. It was the Apostle Paul who admonished the early Christians to be "subject unto the higher powers." See Romans 13:1.
4. Of special interest in tracing eschatological influences in Luther's political opinions see "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants," *Works of Martin Luther*, IV, 247-256, and "On War Against the Turk," *op. cit.*, 75-124.

Many critics of Luther's political opinions do not balance their remarks with one final consideration of Luther's theology. This is Luther's understanding of the Church within the realm of temporal authority. Just as has been shown above, the Christian's obedience to the temporal orders is not a "sportive" aspect of Luther's basic theology and, on the other hand, the role of the Word proclaimed by the Church as judge and corrective within the temporal order is not an arbitrary feature of the same basic theology.

The sovereign God has acted to establish the Church as the community "between the times" and has invested this community with the responsibility of the proclamation of the Word. The Word must be proclaimed as law and therefore as judgment as well as Gospel and therefore as grace. This means that the proclaimer must at times criticize the temporal powers. The law as such functions as a preservative but never redemptively. It is the Gospel which brings freedom and redemption, and it is precisely the freedom which comes from the Gospel which permits, and indeed demands, the Christian to criticize political values and norms.[1] Therefore, in the name of the Gospel the Church must proclaim the law and must at times exercise its right to render a critical assessment of the "civil use" of the law.

---

[1] Friedrich Gogarten's remarkable work, Politische Ethik (Jena: Eugen Diedrich Verlag, 1932), pp. 9-11, 62, exercised wide influence in the 1930's. Unfortunately, he explicitly refused to admit this discriminatory function of the church. In this respect, see also Walter Künneth, Politik zwischen Dämon und Gott (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1955). See also, Karl Heim, Die christliche Ethik: Tübinger Vorlesungen (Tübingen: Katzmann-Verlag, 1955), pp. 281-290, for another statement of the same position but within a more Lutheran-pietistic setting.

There is, however, a limit to the critical assessment of the "civil kingdom," for this on the part of the Church must always be through the efficacy of the preached and heard Word. The Church could proclaim the liberty of the Christian man, the right and duty of every individual Christian to discharge the obligations of his calling within the natural forms of secular society. Beyond this the Church could only hope to permeate society with the redemptive and regenerative power of the Word. This is a suitable working relationship between the two realms as long as the "prince" is a Christian who lends a "listening ear and heart" to the pastor, and as long as the pastor exercises his office in a truly evangelical sense. It is interesting to note, however, that when these conditions are not met, Luther has to resort to his position of 1520 in *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*. When the preached Word proved to be a dream, Luther turned to the Christian prince and called upon his services. The Christian prince in essence became a *summus episcopus*! Could it be that in the end in his desire to safeguard the integrity of the two realms Luther more zealously asserted the "rights of the ruler" rather than the Crown Rights of the Redeemer in His Church?

It can therefore be seen throughout the above discussion that the relationship of the two realms is parallel with Luther's understanding of the relationship between law and Gospel. It is to misunderstand Luther to insist upon a radical division of law *or* Gospel and even a radical division which is sometimes seen in law *and* Gospel. The relationship between the two is much more dialectical than many Lutheran interpreters and critics would have one think. The question still remains, however, in the face of the problematic relationship of law and Gospel, if this is the most fruitful way in which to recover the saeculum as an aspect of the total Christian Gospel. Is there not in Luther such a high tension between the two that law always threatens to separate itself from Gospel and the two realms become thereby absolutely separated, even to the extent that the secular may dominate over the other?[1] On the other hand, Luther's distinction between law and Gospel did give impetus to a kind of secularization of the world which must be profoundly appreciated from the Christian perspective. Ernst Troeltsch called attention to this fact when he saw that Luther's whole approach was to depart from a sacramentalizing of the world which had been characteristic of preceding periods of Christian thought. This de-sacramentalizing of the world Troeltsch saw in Luther's transferral of religion from the realm of sacramental miracle to the inner realm of man's conscience.[2] Correlative with faith's being internalized in the conscience is then to

---

1. In this respect see Gustaf Wingren, Gospel and Church, trans. Ross Mackenzie (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), pp. 105-120, where following a particular interpretation of Luther Wingren insists that a sharp distinction between law and Gospel, between the two realms, is necessary. This dichotomy between the two in Wingren's interpretation of Luther leads Wingren into what is essentially a conservative position in regard to the existing social order.
2. Ernst Troeltsch, Gesammelte Schriften, IV (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1925), pp. 216-230. See also Troeltsch's treatment of the same theme in The Social Teaching of the Christian Church, II, trans. Olive Wyon (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), pp. 540-544. While faith is in Luther internalized in man's conscience, it is still questionable if the individualism which Troeltsch finds in German Lutheranism and which creates an essentially passive relationship to the secular political powers is a necessary and logical conclusion from Luther's own position.

be seen Luther's insistence that vocation is a calling within the saeculum. The old antithesis between worldly involvement and monastic withdrawal is abolished. Man is now to participate fully in the saeculum. As Troeltsch concluded:

> Miracle is defined not simply as supernatural or as the power of divine magic over nature, but it is seen as the restoring of man to his own true essence, the true ground of being, authenticated and made apprehensible for us in Christ through the revelation of merciful love. The sphere of the miraculous activity is thus no longer that of supernature with its corresponding supernatural performances, but rather the simple fulfilling of the sphere of natural activities with the pure and simple miracle of the inner disposition of trust in and union with God. To this extent Goethe was right in extolling Luther as "the man who has once more had the courage to stand firmly on God-given earth."[1]

That there is implicit within Luther's distinction between law and Gospel the possibility of a genuine secularization of the world is unquestionable. It is not necessarily a theological consequence of Luther's position that a secularism in contrast to genuine secularization should have developed. The subsequent development of secularism may very easily lie in certain non-theological factors implicit in the particular historical and sociological milieu in which later Lutheranism developed.

That the Reformation offered other approaches to the saeculum than Luther's distinction between law and Gospel is to be seen in the Geneva reformer, John Calvin. The road of investigation now turns from

---

1. Troeltsch, Gesammelte Schriften, IV, pp. 223-224.

Wittenberg to Geneva.

2. Calvin: Evangelical Humanism

A significant difference exists between the solution of the relationship between the Gospel and the _saeculum_ in the Lutherans, Anabaptists and Calvinists. In Luther the secular sphere was viewed as God's creation, but the Church exercised its function as the sole means of man's salvation. The _saeculum_ was to the Church as law was to Gospel. In contrast, the Anabaptists were considerably less appreciative of activity in the _saeculum_, which for them was actually an expression of the wrath of God. The love of God in Christ was that which operated within the community withdrawn from the _saeculum_ and set over against the _saeculum_. Calvin, in a manner somewhat similar to Luther, made essential distinctions between secular activity and the salvific activity of the Gospel. In contrast to both Luther and the Anabaptists, Calvin insisted that the _saeculum_ could and should be an instrument of God's saving, Christological purpose for the world. In this sense, Calvin's view can in a limited way be called a Protestant _corpus Christianum_, but more properly André Bieler has called Calvin's perspective an "evangelical humanism."[1]

Luther and Calvin, the two central reformers, stand together at several points in spite of their eventual divergencies. They both represent the breakthrough of a freed biblical understanding of life, time and history. In spite of certain connection and continuities with the past, the Aristotelian-Thomistic synthesis is no longer an option for either of them. With the recovery of the biblical understanding of the dynamic nature of history and the insistence upon the acts of divine redemption within this historical continuum, both reformers possessed a keen sensitivity to a biblical Heilsgeschichte and, therefore, to the Christian's life, both private and especially corporate, as a living "between the times." Both, therefore, addressed themselves extensively to the issue of Christian vocation. Overarching these areas of consensus was the fundamental theological conviction of the sovereignty of God. A study of John Calvin's theological thought can begin nowhere but with the latter tenet, for the whole creation exists for no other purpose than to serve the glorification of the sovereign God. Calvin's so-called "evangelical humanism" is rooted in this basic theological starting point.

---

[1] André Bieler, _The Social Humanism of Calvin_, trans. Paul T. Fuhrmann (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), pp. 9-26.

a) Knowledge of God and Knowledge of Man

Calvin and the secularists (humanists) of his day were actually in agreement at one common point: they were in quest of the true human, true man.[1] Now that the medieval period had collapsed, Calvin and the humanists were looking for a new humanism no longer in servitude to medieval mysticism and ecclesiastical sacramentalism and institutional Monophysitism. In their medieval form these factors had actually "de-natured" man. Beyond this point, however, radical divergencies separate Calvin and the new humanists.[2] True man could never be found by a simple reliance upon man's natural knowledge. The true nature of man would be found only when a knowledge of man through God is possessed, insisted Calvin.

---

[1] The whole quest of the enlightenment has been entitled by Alfred Cobban as In Search for Humanity (New York: George Braziller, 1960).

[2] See T. F. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949).

> . . . it is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face, and then descends from contemplating him to scrutinize himself. For we always seem to ourselves righteous and upright and wise and holy -- this pride is innate in all of us -- unless by clear proofs we stand convinced of our own unrighteousness, foulness, folly, and impurity.[1]

Only God can communicate to man the ultimate identity of human nature. It is here that we meet the Calvinistic "pessimism" which is actually the basis of Calvin's "evangelical humanism." This "evangelical humanism" is rooted in Calvin's understanding of the sovereignty of God. Only God can reveal Himself, and accordingly only Godly knowledge can reveal man's true nature to man.

How, then, is man to be understood within the context of the world according to Calvin? Calvin begins his Institutes of the Christian Religion with the doctrine of creation. Man is created by God for a unique function within the world. He is the loftiest proof of divine wisdom.

> Certain philosophers, accordingly, long ago not ineptly called man a microcosm because he is a rare example of God's power, goodness, and wisdom, and contains within himself enough miracles to occupy our minds, if only we are not irked at paying attention to them.[2]

---

[1] John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, I, 1, 2, trans. F. L. Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 37.

[2] Ibid., I, 5, 3, p. 54.

Repeatedly in his writings Calvin refers to man as "a lieutenant of God in governing the world."[1] In virtue of the imago dei man is above the created world.

> It is sure that even in the several parts of the world some traces of God's glory shine. From this we may gather that when his image is placed in man a tacit antithesis is introduced which raises man above all other creatures and, as it were, separates him from the common mass.[2]

The imago dei consists not in the fact that man is endowed with reason and will, but in the fact that these faculties in original man were directed wholly towards knowledge of and obedience to God. This Calvin defends not by further exegesis of the creation narratives but by referring to the restoration of creation in the New Adam, Jesus Christ.

> . . . it seems that we do not have a full definition of "image" if we do not see more plainly those faculties in which man excels, and in which he ought to be thought the reflection of God's glory. That, indeed, can be nowhere better recognized than from the restoration of his corrupted nature.[3]

The imago dei is not something which man possesses by nature. Humanity rests upon the sovereign claim of a sovereign God, and it is this which is revealed in Jesus Christ. For Calvin an adequate theological anthropology must begin with the sovereign act of God in creation, but this can be understood and explicated only by the sovereign act of God in redemption. The basis of Calvin's theological humanism is genuinely evangelical for it is grounded in Christology.

---

[1] Calvin, Corpus Reformatorum, ed. W. Baum, E. Cunitz and E. Reuss (Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1863-1900), VII, 83; XIV, 342; XLIX, 637 ff.; LIII, 138, 140.

[2] Calvin, Institutes, I, 15, 3, pp. 188-189.

[3] Ibid., I, 15, 4, p. 189.

b) Man as Fallen

It is quite obvious that this redemptive and redeeming humanism is not the state in which man finds himself. Why is this so? The radical humanism of Calvin is possible for man only as he is subject to the sovereign God, and this is made possible only through His sovereign act in Jesus Christ. Man is man only if he remains subject to his Creator. And this is precisely what man has not done! Man has fallen into slavery to the world, to himself, and to nature. So serious is this state of rebellion that man does not see it by his own capabilities, for natural man calls this "liberty" instead of "slavery." No man can understand the ways of God and therefore his own manhood, so clouded with sin is man's vision, unless he is enlightened by God.

> He who attributes any more understanding to himself is all the more blind because he does not recognize his own blindness.[1]

While Calvin puts it bluntly that "men have nothing in themselves but sin," he is careful to defend man at the same moment as the supreme creation of God:

> When we so condemn human understanding for its perpetual blindness as to leave it no perception of any object whatever, we not only go against God's Word, but also run counter to the experience of common sense.[2]

---

[1] Calvin, ibid., II, 2, 21, p. 281.
[2] Ibid., II, 2, 12, p. 271.

> Those men whom Scripture (I Cor. 2:14) calls "natural men" were, indeed sharp and penetrating in their investigation of inferior things. Let us, accordingly, learn by their example how many gifts the Lord left to human nature even after it was despoiled of its true good.[1]

Man would not recognize this as his actual state were it not for another man, Jesus Christ. In the light of the Second Adam man realizes that life has been reestablished and reflexively man sees himself having been in a situation of wrong relationship with God.

> All of us without exception are indictable until we are justified by Christ. . . so that no righteousness, no salvation and in fact no good in general are to be found outside Christ.[2]

c) The "True Man"

Man cannot remove himself from this state of sin and absolve himself. It is only as God becomes "true man" that man can truly become man. In the man Christ Jesus,

> God, to bring Himself within the reach of human understanding, humbles Himself and makes Himself small.[3]

Or as Calvin expresses it in the Institutes:

> Hence, it was necessary for the Son of God to become for us "Immanuel, that is, God with us" (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23), and in such a way that his divinity and our human nature might by mutual connection grow together.[4]

---

[1] Ibid., II, 2, 15, pp. 274-275.
[2] Calvin's comments on Ephesians 2:3 in Corpus Reformatorum LV, 227.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Calvin, Institutes, II, 12, 1, pp. 464-465.

In Jesus Christ man meets "true man," man which God intended him to be. Man, however, cannot imitate this Man and thereby become like him. This would do nothing but more seriously impair the already broken relationship between the sovereign God and man. Man can appropriate this, through faith, and this is action within only the Christian community, the *communio sanctorum*.

The Church of Jesus Christ is the arena wherein man's new humanity is enacted and made possible. It is not that God is fettered and bound and can act in no other way. He has chosen proclamation and sacraments to be His channel.

> We see how God, who could in a moment perfect his own, nevertheless desires them to grow up into manhood solely under the education of the church. We see the way set for it: the preaching of the heavenly doctrine has been enjoined upon the pastors. We see that all are brought under the same regulation, that with a gentle and teachable spirit they may allow themselves to be governed by teachers appointed to this function.[1]

Calvin was cautious to insist that a completely restored humanity was an eschatological reality and not a historical possibility. The restoration, however, which man experiences within the scope of historical existence gives him the faith-perspective of *meditatio futurae vitae* and a sense of responsible calling here and now.

All of this is man's true nature and destiny, and upon this theological anthropology Calvin projects the style of man's life and his relationship to the world.

---

[1] *Ibid.*, IV, 1, 5, p. 1017.

d) The Law

Calvin would have summarized the style of the Christian's historical existence as one continuous effort to increase the glory of God within the world. Man within the world was created as a social creature to live in certain basic relationships such as marriage, family, labor, and government. These relationships Calvin saw to be the *lex naturae*, but for Calvin the *lex naturae* was not separate from the *lex Dei*. Indeed the *lex naturae* was rooted in and inseparably derived from the *lex Dei*.[1]

> It is a fact that the law of God which we call the moral law is nothing else than a testimony of natural law and of that conscience which God has engraved upon the minds of men. Consequently, the entire scheme of this equity of which we are now speaking has been prescribed in it. Hence, this equity alone must be the goal and rule and limit of all laws.
>
> Whatever laws shall be framed to that rule, directed to that goal, bound by that limit, there is no reason why we should disapprove of them, howsoever they may differ from the Jewish law, or among themselves.[2]

Here one finds one of the deeper contrasts with Lutheranism. Whereas Luther distinguished law and Gospel and tried always to give pre-eminence to the latter, Calvin actually united them. There is always the danger in Calvinism that this union of the two may eventuate in a legalism, but Calvin's attempt to redeem society and his refusal to make the radical separation between secular authority and religious authority are rooted in this union. Christian freedom within the community of faith was freedom from Jewish and papish rites and observances which had no place in the new dispensation. The moral law, however, remained in effect. Christ did not abrogate the law; he fulfilled it. By fulfilling the moral law Christ transformed it from the arena of outward performance into the inward conscience of the Christian. In contrast to Luther, Calvin insisted that Christ did not abolish the law, he rather fulfilled it and internalized it.

---

[1] See M.-E. Chenevière, *La pensée politique de Calvin* (Geneva: Ed. Labor, 1937), pp. 46ff, 66ff. for discussion of Calvin's views of natural law. See also J. T. McNeill, "Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers," *Journal of Religion*, XXVI (1946), 168-182. See also, J. Bohatec, *Calvin und das Recht* (Feudingen: Buchdruck und Verlags-Anstalt, 1934).

[2] Calvin, *Institutes*, IV, 20, 16, p. 1504.

Man's fall, however, has corrupted even these basic natural relationships. These relationships cannot be restored by a simple humanism which the Renaissance figures proposed, but, says Calvin, these relationships can be restored only as a new humanity is restored, i.e., in Christ. This restoration is not received individualistically as in the Anabaptist sense. As man is by nature a social creature, so he is also by salvation.

> The basis on which we believe the church is that we are fully convinced we are members of it. In this way our salvation rests upon sure and firm supports, so that, even if the whole fabric of the world were overthrown, the church could neither totter nor fall. First, it stands by God's election, and cannot waver or fail any more than his eternal providence can. Secondly, it has in a way been joined to the steadfastness of Christ, who will no more allow his believers to be estranged from him than that his members be rent and torn asunder.[1]

---

[1] Calvin, ibid., IV, 1, 3, p. 1015.

e) The Church in the World[1]

The Christian Church, therefore, is the embryonic form of the "new world," the "new creation," and through its activity in the *saeculum* it serves as the instrument for restoring these broken relationships into their original intention. The Christian man, the Church, must constantly sacrifice itself to God for the sake of the world. This is beautifully expressed in one of Calvin's prayers:

> Grant, Almighty God, that since thou has deigned to take us as a priesthood to Thyself, and hast chosen us when we were not only in the lowest condition, but even profane and alien to all holiness, and hast consecrated us to Thyself by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may offer ourselves as holy victims to Thee: O grant that we may bear in mind our office and our calling, and sincerely devote ourselves to Thy service, and so present to Thee our efforts and our labours, that Thy name may be truly glorified in us, and that it may really appear that we have been ingrafted into the body of Thy only begotten Son; and as He is the chief and the only true and perpetual priest, may we become partakers of that priesthood with which Thou hast been pleased to honour Him, so that He may take us as associates to Himself; and thus may Thy name be perpetually glorified by the whole body as well as by the Head. Amen.[2]

When this whole sanctified offering is rendered to the glory of God by the embryonic "new world," the Church, a new force is set afoot in the *saeculum* attempting to make the whole of man's activity "pleasing to God."[3]

---

[1] A most incisive study of the church and the world in Calvin is Karl Fröhlich, *Gottesrecht, Welt, und Kirche bei Calvin* (München: Reinhardt, 1930).

[2] Quoted in R. S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., 1953), p. 274.

[3] Calvin, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, III, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), 365-376.

Calvin found great significance in the passage from Zechariah 14:20. "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar."[1] While the Church is never to be identified with the whole of the world, nevertheless, through the life of the church within the world the possibility is always present that even the most common of things can be sanctified to the glory of God.

f) The Christian's Calling

That which Weber called the "one thing unquestionably new" with the Protestant Reformation[2] "the valuation of fulfillment of duty in worldly affairs as the highest form which the moral activity of the individual could assume" was joined with Calvin's own peculiar emphasis on election. Calvin's followers were given both a consciousness of purpose in the world and also the conviction that one is responsible to God, thus acquiring a sense of being divinely chosen and providentially guided. When this "responsible to God" conviction is joined with the

---

1. Calvin, Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets, V, 449-452.
2. Max Weber, Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 80.
3. Weber's thesis regarding Calvinistic asceticism needs to be scrutinized more carefully. The most notable and questionable aspect of his thesis is that his examples are not taken from "pure Calvinism." In fact, the closest figure to Calvin which he cites is Richard Baxter. The vast per centage of his supportive material is derived actually from men and movements who departed radically from Calvinistic doctrines of election and predestination. For example, Milton rejected predestination. The Quakers were hardly concerned about it. The Wesleyans found this the most difficult facet of Calvinistic doctrine. To extend the Calvinistic sphere of influence to embrace Benjamin Franklin, the revolutionary Deist, hardly commends the historical basis of the argument to the serious student of history of doctrine.

conviction, which came from Luther, that all callings are holy to God, there are all the ingredients for a life that seeks to work in this world "for the greater glory of God."[1]

Though Puritanism and capitalism contributed to caricatures of the Calvinist doctrine of vocation, these should not be impediments to a fair assessment of Calvin's profound significance in his time and in the contemporary situation for a new positive understanding of the worldly activity of man. In contrast to Calvin's own position Puritanism at its best was Calvinism denatured! Calvin is not to be held responsible for Puritan moralism and asceticism. Rather, as a theologian and churchman, he gave to Protestants a new sense of responsibility in the *saeculum*,[2] an "evangelical humanism," and the incentive to be "successful" in that life *ad majoram Dei gloriam*. This drive to "succeed" was intended to be kept within proper limits by the exercise of godly discipline within "the community of the elect."

---

1. While it is a mistake to speak of Calvinistic "asceticism," it cannot be denied that Calvin took an austere position as far as man's worldly accomplishments in the arts were concerned. Calvin distinguished a hierarchy of art on three levels. The highest art is that of God's system and creation. The next level is the art in the beauty of nature as it shows God's creative power. The lowest level, which is sinful and inspired by the devil, is the origin of this false art, which either exists for its own sake or serves pagan interests outright, to the Greeks. See Léon Wencelius, *L'Esthétique de Calvin* (Paris: Societe d'edition "Les Belles Lettres," 1937).
2. In response to Weber's thesis it should be pointed out that if Calvinistic "asceticism" is to be held accountable for the sweatshops of Victorian England, the picture must be balanced with a recognition of the effort of the lay preachers of Methodism which led to the British Trade Union movement.

Calvin's view of vocation can be summarized in two central points:

(1) It is a complement to his doctrine of election. Without the doctrine of vocation Calvin's doctrine of election would have been essentially separatist and world-denying. But vocation shows that there is no election without responsibility in the world.

> . . . The Lord bids each of us in all life's actions to look to his calling for he knows with what great restlessness our human nature flames, with what fickleness it is borne hither and thither, how its ambition longs to embrace various things at once. Therefore, lest through our stupidity and rashness everything be turned topsy-turvy, he has appointed duties for every man in his particular way of life. And that no man may thoughtlessly transgress his limits, he has named these various kinds of livings "callings." Therefore each individual has his own kind of living assigned to him by the Lord as a sort of sentry post so that he may not needlessly wander about through life.[1]

(2) The doctrine of election focused essentially upon the eschatological end, while its corollary, vocation, focused upon the world of here and now. While there are definitely "other worldly" dimensions to Calvin's thought and these are at times prominent, the context in which election is demonstrated - which is the same context as that in which man's calling is fulfilled - is always this life, this world.

While Calvinism has proliferated its sectarian ascetic and world-denying movements, and while on the other hand, it has produced a certain degree of capitalistic impetus, these stand to show what happens when a faith loses its specifically Christian context.[1] On the basis of Calvin's own theology he understood the world as the arena of God's gracious action, and the human achievements of man can and are in this context no longer man's quest for autonomy, i.e., secularism, but vocations from God. This is the basis of Calvin's "evangelical humanism."

---

[1] Calvin, Institutes, III, 10, 6, 724.

3. Philip Jacob Spener: The Rise of Pietism

When Luther died in 1546 he left behind him no Joshua as Moses in biblical times had done. Phillip Melanchthon's conciliatory spirit for all the varieties of Lutheran kaleidoscopic colors was hardly the answer to the disturbances which swept the German church. Luther was hardly buried before Lutherans began to attribute to him authority on all manner of questions that he never claimed.

With the general rejection of Melanchthon's seventeen articles of the Augsburg Confession, Lutheranism sought an authoritative confession to lay alongside the Bible on the altar of belief. The new formulation came in 1577 in the form of The Formula of Concord. This document, a palladium of hyper-orthodoxy, became the instrument for subduing any differences of doctrinal opinion and ushered in the age of Lutheran Scholasticism. Such a monolithic attempt at doctrinal conformity brought in its train great discord and doctrinal "hair-splitting" which marked the German scene of the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The emphasis of the theologians was upon every "jot and tittle" of "sound doctrine," and they had forgotten the

---

[1] Weber's thesis has this advantage that it shows how the best of movements can become inhuman and monstrous!

"weightier measures of the law" -- "that ye love one another."

Such was the situation into which Philip Jacob Spener was born in the Alsatian village of Rappolstein on January 13, 1635.[1] The period of Lutheran Scholasticism had played itself off visibly in the life of the empirical church. Sermons had become lifeless, long polemics. Personal Christian discipline had become secondary to "right doctrine." In many universities, Wittenberg being the most obvious,[2] piety was actually eschewed as being detrimental to the theological enterprise. Spener set himself to the task of "church renewal" through a renewal of personal religion on the basis of Luther's principles. He set himself to the task of redeeming public worship from the taunt that "in the Lutheran temple there were four dumb idols -- the font, the altar, the pulpit, and the confessional." Before Spener lay a turbulent lifetime of trying to reclaim a church which in the throes of a new scholasticism had actually become secularized. The assessment given by Martin Schmidt is somewhat excessive but still points to the significance of Spener:

> In the history of the evangelical church in Germany only one man has attained, and long maintained, a place only a little behind that of Martin Luther, P. J. Spener, the father of German Pietism.[3]

---

[1] Hans Bruns, Ein Reformator nach der Reformation: Leben und Wirken P. J. Speners (Marburg: Spener-Verlag, 1937). On the American scene there are only two works, both of which are marked by serious lapses of true scholarship. See M. E. Richard, P. J. Spener and His Work (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1897), and a fictionalized life by Karl A. Wildenhaln, Philip Jacob Spener (Philadelphia: J. F. Smith, 1881).

[2] Hans-Martin Rotermund, Orthodoxie und Pietismus (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1960), p. 8.

[3] Martin Schmidt, "Spener und Luther," Luther Jahrbuch, hrsg. Franz Lau, Jhrg. XXIV (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1957), p. 102.

Spener was primarily a reformer of Christian life, not a reformer of Christian thought. Therefore, he rightly belongs in a history of Christian piety rather than in the history of Christian doctrine *per se*. He was, however, not theologically naïve.[1] Since, however, he was the "father" of a movement of considerable influence in the history of Protestantism, he is of special interest for this study.

For Spener the real theological motivation lay in the conviction: true orthodoxy (*Lehre-Reinheit*) involved "true living" (*Lebens-Heiligheit*).[2] This led him to found within the existent church structure small groups called *Collegia Pietatis*, where men and women met regularly to study the Bible, share their experience, and seek a corporate growth in grace. The ideal was "a band of men, whose hearts God had touched."[3] If the church was to be renewed, a beginning would have to be made with the remnant of true Christians in every congregation. These had to be gathered and edified in private meetings in order that they might become the salt which prevents decay and the leaven which permeates the whole lump.

"Hearts touched by God" was the guiding motiv of Spener's whole thought. Not merely one's own experience, but the experience of every age, and especially of the church universal, was to be taken with ultimate seriousness. Epistemologically, Spener emphasized experience as the arbiter of human judgments rather than an authoritarian appeal to Confessions and Formulae.[1] Even the biblical revelation of God's will and purpose had come through human experience of the Holy Spirit giving ancient words contemporary meaning in the life and faith of believers. The crucial confirmation was the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit.[2]

---

[1] See Emmanuel Hirsch, *Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie*, II (GÜtersloh: C. Bertelmann, 1949-1954), 91-155.

[2] See Spener, *Pia Desideria*, trans. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 95.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 89-92.

While secondary emphasis was given by Spener to the social group or the gathered people, the major force of his renewal was focused on the individual. The hope for renewal lay with the renewed individual -- the new man who was renewed inwardly. The sum of Christianity was repentance,[3] faith, and new obedience. This, Spener puts forth in the Pia Desideria, not so much by clearly delineated principles but by the not infrequent references to such writers as John Arndt, John Tauler, and Johann Gerhard.[4] The consuming drive of Spener was to transform the individual, i.e., to lead the individual beyond the point of an acceptance of forensic justification to the point of personal sanctification, and thereby to transform the whole body of Christ so that it in turn could be saving remnant of society.[1] The theological language of Spener is filled with the terms of personal religion: "rebirth," "new man," "inner man," "illumination," "edification," and "union of Christ with the soul."[2] At this point, while at many others he is a most biased reporter of pietism, Albrecht Ritschl is correct: Spener's whole program was actually a rejection of the scholastic tradition and the substitution for it of the tradition of mystical spiritualism much more akin to the late Middle Ages than with historic Lutheranism.[3] It was

---

[1] Spener on many occasions defended his theological orthodoxy, however, by claiming unqualified belief in the Formula of Concord. Still, this was judged rightly within the context of the believer's pious experience.

[2] Hirsch, op. cit., p. 94f.

[3] Spener, however, placed no stock in Buszkampf (penitential struggle) which Francke and other later pietists felt to be so important. In fact, from all indications Spener was a reserved man and placed no emphasis whatsoever upon emotionalism which became common in later pietism.

[4] Spener, op. cit., pp. 66, 96, 99, 100, 106, 110, 111, 119, 120.

> an impressive attempt to define Christianity and the church anthropologically, from man's point of view, without sacrificing the absolute power of God. It was an attempt to view Christian existence single-mindedly from its goal, its *eschaton*, its perfection.[4]

In this sense he was a precursor of Schleiermacher.

Pietism historically has been marked by a withdrawal from the world into the security of its spiritually self-contained conventicles.

---

1. This basic pietistic understanding of the church and its relation to the world can still be seen in certain quarters of Lutheran ecclesiastical thought. For instance, Ole Hallesby, *Den Kristelige Troslaere* (2 vols.; Kristiana: Luther-Stiftelsens Forlag, 1921). See Kent S. Knutson, "Community and the Church," in *The New Community in Christ*, ed., James Burtness and John Kildahl (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965), pp. 46-50, for analysis of Hallesby's ecclesiology. To some degree Karl Heim, *Jesus the World's Perfecter*, trans. D. H. van Daalen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), understands the church-world relationship in like manner. Heim's pietistic perspective on the church, however, is tempered by his insistence upon a Christological understanding of the Body of Christ. See Heim, *ibid.*, p. 205-234.
2. See Spener, *Erbauliche Evangelisch-und Epistolische Sonntags-Andachten* (Frankfurt: 1716).
3. Albrecht Ritschl, *Geschichte des Pietismus*, I (Bonn: Marcus, 1880-1886), 172.
4. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-129.

Spener, however, cannot be held responsible for the later excesses of the movement. He was embarrassed by the opinions and practices of followers who tended to be one-sided. He gave no encouragement to zealots who overemphasized the breach between sacred and secular. In fact Spener, himself, had several "worldly" interests, including the study of heraldry, on which he lectured with great popularity at the University of Tübingen.[1]

Those emphases, which became overt as historic pietism, were, however, covert in Spener. While he did not dichotomize as severely as the later pietists the sacred and the secular, the distinction was nevertheless there in the radical separation of the *Collegia Pietatis* from the general concerns of the *saeculum*. He tended to oversimplify man's moral and spiritual ills, being frequently ready with pat answers of inward piety which tended toward an introspective legalism in their personal applications. As a result pietism often failed to deal with the larger social and political issues which confronted the total *saeculum*.[2]

Under the leadership of August Hermann Francke (1663-1727) a second generation pietism did found social institutions. However, this

---

1. Paul Grünberg, *Philipp Jakob Spener*, I (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1893-1906), 383.
2. In his interpretation of Spener, Karl Barth has overstated the case against the so-called pietistic "flight" from the concrete reality of the world. Cf. Barth, *Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert* (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1952), pp. 82, 107. Barth's aphorism is surely an overstatement: "Better the Church in hell than with pietists, of higher or lower type -- in a heaven which does not exist." Barth, however, is pointing his finger at pietism's most vulnerable spot.

activity was limited to orphan asylums, boarding schools, foreign missions and Bible societies. In Spener and in later pietism the guiding concern, the almost exclusive concern, was caring for the health of the Body of Christ, not the body politic, not the body secular.

4. Friedrich Schleiermacher: A Theology of Culture

The *Aufklärung* reached its summit in the nineteenth century which was actually the great era of intellectual miscegenation in the western world. The prism rays of new knowledge and new avenues of exploration waited in the nineteenth century for a unification and blending together. A new synthesis was demanded. Within the scope of Protestant theology the older options of biblical authority, confessional orthodoxy or simple cultivation of piety were no longer viable. Protestant theology was caught between pietism on one hand and rationalism on the other. Where could it turn? The man of the hour was Friedrich Schleiermacher. For it was he who saw clearly that neither avenue was now accessible and somehow a new path had to be made. In his sermons in Berlin[1] Schleiermacher pictured the pietists and the rationalists as being predicted in Jesus' address to the Pharisees and Sadducees of Mark 12:17-27, and from this text he drew this conclusion: "The Saviour sided with neither of the two schools; he stood between them. Christians should also do the same."[2] In a similar manner, as Barth has so well shown,[1] Schleiermacher desired desperately to participate in the exciting cultural achievements of his time and at the same time hold fast to his religious sentiments. One could not come down at one pole in opposition to the other, for the polar options here were a withdrawn pietism on one hand, and a secularistic rationalism on the other. A unifying position which transcended the weaknesses of both and incorporated the valid concerns of both was demanded. To this task Schleiermacher set himself.

---

[1] The sermons of Schleirmacher comprise the second division of the collected works of Schleiermacher. See Schleiermacher, *Sämmtliche Werke* (31 vols.; Berlin: Reimer, 1834). Throughout this treatment of Schleiermacher the references to his sermons will be cited as to volume number within the second division of his collected works.

[2] Schleiermacher, *Predigten* VI, 164f.

The rich and involved system of Schleiermacher cannot be condensed within the scope of this investigation. Yet certain motifs of his theology are especially relevant to the exploration of the role of the secular in Protestant theology. Three themes will be examined: Schleiermacher's anthropology and the concept of _feeling_, his understanding of _religion_, and the resulting relation between _religion and culture_.

a) Feeling

The axis of Schleiermacher's theology and philosophy consists of a definite and definitive _a priori_, underlying any descriptive statement of man and his world. This underlying _a priori_ or disposition or _Gemütszustand_ all men share in common. This disposition or frame of mind Schleiermacher claimed to be founded in a prereflective immediacy, "the immediate presence of whole undivided being."[2]

---

1. Karl Barth, _Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert_ (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1952), p. 380.
2. Schleiermacher, _The Christian Faith_, trans. and ed., H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. and R. Clark, 1928), pp. 6-7.

Earlier in his Soliloquies, published posthumously, he had defined man as an ethical being whose highest task was to shape the self into an individual who genuinely represented mankind as a whole.

> Each man is meant to represent humanity in his own way, combining its element uniquely. . . . This thought alone has uplifted me, and set me apart from everything common and untransformed in my surroundings; it has made of me an elect creation of the Godhead, rejoicing in a unique form and character.[1]

This representation of humanity did not consist for Schleiermacher in following the Kantian moral imperative, but rather it consisted in the individual unfolding of humanity according to the laws of Nature. What Schleiermacher succeeds in doing is to put forth in an ethical context an anthropology which is founded upon a naturalism or absolute idealism severed from any transcendent moral reference.

In the Dialektik,[2] also published posthumously, Schleiermacher addressed himself to the anthropological question more within the epistemic reference. It is here that the above mentioned *a priori* or *axis* becomes most obvious. Thinking eventuates in knowledge, and knowledge requires two basic forms of correspondence, i.e., between the thought and its actual object or reference, and between thoughts held by two or more minds. The question for Schleiermacher was: What is the ground of unity common for these polarities and which can produce knowledge? Man's thinking has a basic sense of certitude which goes beyond these polarities. What is this basal ground of certitude? From one perspective, claims Schleiermacher, it is God, and from another perspective it is the World. It is true that here Schleiermacher's hand was on the door that opened to "pantheistic" assumptions in nineteenth-century theology, and whether this was intentional or inadvertent is impossible to say. It should be stated, however, that Schleiermacher made a concerted effort to differentiate these two, God and the World. "Think the world without God, and it has no bond of union; think God without the world, and the object of our thought is devoid of content."[1] The more specific distinction is that the world is the Unity including all antitheses; God is the Unity excluding all antitheses. Whether this is a sufficient distinction is debatable. What Schleiermacher was attempting was to find a point of identity beyond the subject-object relation upon which all thinking and doing could rest, i.e., a point which would be common to all men and which all men could accept readily.

---

[1] Schleiermacher, Soliloquies, trans. H. N. Friess (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1963), p. 317.

[2] Schleiermacher, Dialektik in Schleiermachers Werke, Dritter Band (Leipzig: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1903), I-118.

> The teaching presented always proceeds from the conviction that it is necessary to understand these opposites in their relativity, in their purely quantitative contradictoriness; and to find between them or above them the "common feeling," or the "common equalizing note," or the "one thing needful," the "complete rest of the soul in God," the "good," "unity," identity," . . .[2]

It is at this point that Schleiermacher's concept of "feeling"

---

1. A paraphrase of Schleiermacher in H. R. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 40.
2. Karl Barth, Theology and Church, trans. Louise Pettibone Smith (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 167.

enters. The intuitive awareness of certitude which was grounded either in God or in the World Schleiermacher characterized as "feeling." "Feeling" is the vehicle of the special mode of the individual's existence wherein this inner unity of the self issues in the direct and complete outward manifestation of humanity. Feeling then was rooted in what Schleiermacher called the "presence of whole undivided being." This immediate "self-consciousness" must precede the self-consciousness that is mediated by the world and society.

Within every individual there was this "feeling" or "subjective knowing" beyond the subject-object dichotomy. Upon this original assumption he erected the first portion of his theological structure, i.e., an insistence that feeling, qualified as "immediate self-consciousness," and not "knowing" or "doing," is the constitutive element of all genuine religion.[1]

This primal "feeling" is neither morality (doing) nor speculative metaphysics (knowing). Therefore, religion cannot be identical with moral behavior because some events which are considered to be religious are not morally right; therefore, what is meant by "religion" must be different from what is meant by "morality."[2] Nor is religion metaphysical thought, although the object of the religious activity is the same as that of morality and philosophy, i.e., the universe and man's relation in it.[1]

---

[1] Dilthey attributes his separation of religion from morality, science, and metaphysics to his pietistic education, his acquaintance with the spirit of the Christian religion, his study of Kant, and his conviction of the necessity of complete freedom of science and philosophy from interference from religious quarters. See Dilthey, Leben Schleiermachers, I (Berlin: Reimer, 1870), 301-417.

[2] Schleiermacher, On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers, trans. John Oman (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), p. 31: "Piety cannot be an instinct craving for a mess of metaphysical and ethical crumbs."

Behind "doing" and "knowing" is "feeling" which is made up of two constitutive elements: one self-originated and the other non-self-originated.[2] The latter element presupposes a cause other than, or "beyond" the self, what Schleiermacher called a "whence." It is said that if our relationship to this "Other" is examined, we find or "feel" it to be one of total receptivity or absolute dependence.[3] This "consciousness of absolute dependence," is then designated "the self-identical essence of piety." "The feeling of absolute dependence is in and of itself a coexistence of God in the self-consciousness."[4]

b) Religion

In his more general definitions of religion Schleiermacher described the phenomenon of religion as a living in the endless nature of

---

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41. See also, Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, pp. 7-11.
2. Dilthey, *op. cit.*, p. 421, has rightly called attention to the fact that this "Other" or "whence" spoken of in Schleiermacher's sermons, but not treated fully until the writing of the *Christian Faith*, is in tension with a more "immanental" concept in *On Religion*. In fact, as he points out, at the time when Schleiermacher was delivering his "addresses" his sermons seemed to portray a much more theistic idea of God and a greater congeniality to the Christian Church. Dilthey claims that it is the sermons which represent Schleiermacher's personal views, and that the "addresses" and *Soliloquies* are literary presentations adapted to the preconceptions of their audience, which were perhaps intended to prepare their readers for a fuller acceptance of Christianity later. At best, this can remain only a speculation based on silence!
3. Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith*, pp. 12-13.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

the Whole. It was an attempt springing from within man himself to perceive and to intuit his place and the place of all things in relation to each other and within the Whole. Religion had the quality of passivity and was spoken of as man's lying on the bosom of the Universe and feeling its throbbing life and creative power becoming one with man's own life and instinctive powers. Religion is not first a speaking but a listening to the All in its expressions and acts. It is to stand in awe and to allow one's self to be overcome by the marvels of the working of the All. Through all of this religion is discovery in that one finds that Spirit which pervades and embraces the cosmic whole.[1]

What Schleiermacher was trying to secure was the independence of the religious phenomenon in all men from any dependence upon knowledge scientific, metaphysical or moral. In other words, the experience of pious feeling was direct and immediate in the same instant the self-consciousness was direct and immediate.

> Your feeling is piety in so far as it expresses, in the manner described, the being and life common to you and the All. Your feeling is piety in so far as it is the result of the operation of God in you by means of the operation of the world upon you.[2]

Each human being is a unique embodiment of the universal All; piety intuits the Universe in every single life.

---

1. These are general statements to be found throughout Schleiermacher's *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

> In the midst of finitude to be one with the Infinite and in every moment to be eternal is the immortality or religion. Therefore, strive after it, strive even here to annihilate your personality and to live in the One and the All; strive to be more than yourself, so that when you lose yourself you may lose but little.[1]

Religion within the specifically Christian frame of reference embodies, according to Schleiermacher, three essential ingredients. The "feeling of absolute dependence" leads necessarily to communion, i.e., "feeling" in its essence must call forth a community or "church."[2] Secondly, this sense of piety requires monotheism. The feeling of absolute dependence not only includes a consciousness of the individual's finitude, but it includes of necessity a sense of totality of finitude. In this sense the feeling of absolute dependence includes all "lesser gods."[3] Thirdly, this sense of dependence must produce teleological purpose and movement. This latter characteristic is important for the next theme to be dealt with in that it is Schleiermacher's insistence that the Christian will find his sense of dependence (passivity) always leading to involvement (activity), or that basal feeling of piety is always convinced that "some particular thing has to be done."[4]

These three ingredients have of necessity a "fixed historical point" in Jesus Christ. This historical point is both the origin and the source of the external unity necessary for the survival of the

---

1. Ibid., pp. 100-101.
2. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, pp. 26-31.
3. Ibid., pp. 34-37.
4. Ibid., pp. 40-44.
5. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, pp. 44-52.

Christian religion.[1] "All Christians trace the communion to which they belong back to Christ."[2]

c) Piety and Culture

The question now arises: What is the individual like who draws near to this historical center through the medium of a "feeling of absolute dependence"? In what direction does he move if this whole experience has a teleological thrust to it?

The life of piety was for Schleiermacher primarily an activity inwardly directed upon God or upon God in man. This was his understanding of prayer.[3] "Nothing betrays a man's genuine standpoint in theology more unerringly than his view of Prayer,"[4] said one of the leading Anglo-Saxon theologians of a decade ago. Schleiermacher's theology in all its ramifications focuses particularly at this point. Prayer was for Schleiermacher a withdrawal from participation in the things of the world; it was a withdrawal to the place where there is a union of man with God which is removed from any determining factors such as the finite things of existence.[5]

---

1. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, pp. 44-52.
2. Ibid., p. 54.
3. Ibid., pp. 668-675.
4. Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 92.
5. Schleirmacher, Predigten, VI, 171. The author is indebted in this discussion of prayer and the passive state of dependence in Schleiermacher to an unpublished lecture given by Karl Barth in Basel, Switzerland, in 1961. It was Barth's suggestion that attention to Schleiermacher's sermons rather than his formal theological works might be more revealing of his basic intentions. The translated quotations from the sermons have been edited to correspond with other English translations as found in Barth, Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl, trans. Brian Cozens (New York: Harper and Row, 1959) and Barth, Theology and Church, pp. 159-199.

One cannot stay in this state of withdrawal indefinitely. Prayer is actually the connecting link between man's withdrawal from the world and his re-entry into that world.

> If the word first received in the human heart blossoms only there . . . then our life also is nothing more than a voice in the wilderness like the witness of John. The life of Christ which is now in us must go out of the desert into the world. . . . there should then be for us no difference between the desert and Jerusalem; no difference between the moments of self-renewing concentration in the silence of withdrawal . . . and our active life.[1]

Prayer of necessity must become action or indeed it is not prayer. The pious feeling seeks social expression.[2] Prayer is "the living, secure feeling that however far in the depths human life may still be on man's gradual ascent towards ruling the world by his work, yet the great miracle of God can always reach fulfillment in all men."[3] This is the teleological direction of the inward pious state. In another sermon which Schleiermacher preached in Berlin one finds all the words commonly associated with more recent forms of "activisitic Christianity."[4] Religion is the manner in which everything is ennobled; it is the carrying through and applying the "words of the Lord" to every aspect of life. This so-called activism is predicated upon the fact that "what comes from God, can come from God only through men; what God needs to do in order to accomplish this or that, he does only through

---

1. Schleiermacher, Predigten, III, 728.
2. Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 674.
3. Schleiermacher, Predigten, III, 424.
4. Ibid., 458.

the service of those who hear his will."[1] This seems to be the import of Schleiermacher's thought in The Christian Faith:

> . . . right prayer only arises when we are engaged in the activities that go to fulfill our Christian vocation. Thus every true moment of prayer rests on a moment or element of action, so that prayer cannot destroy action without being itself destroyed; on the other hand, the presentiment expressed in such prayer as originates otherwise is bound to be purely arbitrary, and can carry with it no certainty whatever that it is in harmony with the ruling activity of Christ.[2]

Schleiermacher in his sermons maintained that the individual's conscientious observance of the responsibilities of citizenship in the civil state were in actuality activities of "the kingdom of God."[3] This is a theme anticipatory of one which Albrecht Ritschl would later stress in his theology.

The Grundmotiv of the movement from passivity to activity in Schleiermacher is the premise established in the earliest part of his principal work when he insisted that "God-consciousness" is wholly "related to the totality of the active states"[4] in the idea of the kingdom of God.

While the above exposition shows what may be considered a logical progression in Schleiermacher's thought from the basic *a priori* "feeling" which lies behind "knowing" and "doing" to the final state where man finds himself actively involved in the *saeculum* both in "knowing" and "doing," the question must be entertained: Does Schleiermacher's logic from "feeling" to "activity" move as convincingly as he would hope? Was the "mystical" or "pious feeling" the actual starting point in Schleiermacher's whole concern, or was it simply the convenient vehicle for him to show to the "cultured despisers of religion" that which Christianity characterized as feeling of piety was not the antithesis but the real foundation of secular activity? Is Schleiermacher really a *theologian* in the historic Reformation sense or is he an *apologist*? There can be no doubt that he genuinely wanted to fulfill the role of a *Christian theologian addressing culture*, but did he not in turn become a *theologian* whose theology was more characteristically expressive of the culture of the day than a theology which spoke a Word to the culture? It seems obvious in his sermons, where one would most likely find the real personal convictions of the man, that he operates with a particular understanding of culture which he then attempts to show is really the social and cultural reality of the Christian faith itself. Culture and faith thereby become so intermingled that it is difficult to discern the reality of one from the other. Or does Schleiermacher really intend that one should make a distinction? In this sense Schleiermacher has rightly been called by Karl Barth "a theologian of Christian culture."[1]

---

[1] Schleiermacher, Predigten, III, 637.

[2] Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 674.

[3] Schleiermacher, Predigten, III, 52, 352-355, 390f.

[4] Schleiermacher, Christian Faith, p. 43. The totality of the active states included for Schleiermacher the state as the guardian of order and peace, the civil profession in which the Christian was to live out his vocation, marriage and family life, and the more general social arena where Schleiermacher expressed his concerns for the socially depressed in the path of advancing civilization. See Barth, Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl, pp. 319-320.

---

[1] Barth, *Theology and Church*, p. 198.

Was not the cultural situation his actual starting point, and was not the "mystical" or "pious" the apologetic means of winning his audience? If this be true, then Schleiermacher has forced the Christian faith into a new and alien mold where the very "power of the Gospel" has been brunted by the Zeitgeist of "pious feeling." If this be true, the "pious feeling" cannot be separated from the cultural accretions which so prominently marked the Aufklärung, i.e., individualism, humanism, and naturalism.

Even if the category of "feeling" be considered the authentic Grundlage of Schleiermacher's system, does not another question raise its head? Has not Schleiermacher allowed himself to be pushed into the corner of naturalistic interpretations of the action of God in history, and thereby whatever importance the biblical assertion of the historical acts of God may have had for him, they were condensed into the chamber of "pious feeling." The timeful acts of God cease to be in time as such and become the static dot or moment of the individual's pious experience.[1]

There does not seem, therefore, to be any inner logic which moves from the act of withdrawal to the act of involvement. Schleiermacher's theology of prayer in its first stage might very easily have been accepted by the pietists of his time gathering in their secluded conventicles! Prayer might just as easily remain in the privacy of one's own chamber, for prayer understood on the basis of absolute dependence does not possess the force of logic which of necessity sends the pray-er once again into the world. And what is more, prayer and the world, the religious life and the secular life are divided from each other in the same sense as a division is made between man's inner life and his outer life. The two are related only as the inner life is the impetus for the outer life. Such a division is always tenuous, to say the least.

---

[1] In this sense, Schleiermacher is prophetic of contemporary existentialist theology as found in Bultmann who with existentialist categories does precisely the same thing with any biblical Heilsplan. See Heinrich Ott, Geschichte und Heilsgeschichte in Theologie Rudolf Bultmanns (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1955), pp. 116-134.

5. A Historical Summary

Throughout this historical survey an undercurrent of tension has constantly been obvious. Theologically this problem can be classified, as H. Richard Niebuhr has so helpfully done, as a tension between Christ and culture.[1] Behind this tension, however, lies the more fundamental problem. How does a faith-perspective which is essentially historical adjust itself to a climate which is essentially metaphysical? The question which was posed at the outset of this study is in reality the tension which lies behind the theological enterprise of western Christianity's attempt to wrestle with the reality of the world or the secular. The tension is between a basically temporal orientation in Hebrew thought and a basically spatial orientation in Greek thought. While this is spoken of as a tension, it should not be viewed as an antithesis. It is not a matter of choice between spatial and temporal categories. It is rather a matter of deciding in what manner can the two be dialectically related so as to bear witness faithfully to the historic biblical understanding of the world. A synoptic summary of the theological material treated above is now in order.

---

[1] Niebuhr, _op. cit._

a) Pre-Constantinian Christianity

The period prior to the Edict of 312 can be classified as pre-Constantinian. This was a period characterized by an open struggle, even at times at the cost of martyrdom, between the secular world and the Christian faith. The response of a persecuted church in such a climate of hostility is understandably one in which the church conceives itself as a force standing over against secular society. This posture of standing-over-against at times encouraged a retreat from the world as can be witnessed in the movement of the hermits to the wilderness. A heightened emphasis upon the apocalyptic end-time intensified this dichotomizing of the world which to the pre-Constantinian Christian frequently presented itself as the arena of evil on the one hand, the Christian community which was existing in hope of an immediate translation to a realm beyond the vicissitudes of this space-world on the other hand. Morally speaking, the task of the Christian was to keep himself uncontaminated from the affairs of the saeculum. At best he was to suffer patiently the afflictions of his time with little hope of these being rectified within the scope of this world. This period could be typologized as "space abutting space." Attention should be called, however, to a certain temporal understanding which, nevertheless, pervaded the thinking of early Christianity. The apocalyptic deliverance was still a historical and therefore temporal-end event. In such a historical situation, however, theological labor could hardly be expected to produce a positive theological understanding of the saeculum.

b) The Constantinian Period

With the Edict of 312 the Constantinian period of the Church arrived. In its essential features this period was to extend through the Middle Ages. The two principal theologians of the period were Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. First, through the medium of Neo-platonism and later through the re-discovery of Aristotle classical Greek philosophical speculation came to full power in Christian theological discourse. The world demanded an explanation and interpretation which would go beyond that given it by earlier Christian thinkers. Essentially the attempt of theology in this period was to depict a hierarchically arranged world, and this was done with the aid of Greek metaphysical categories. In such a hierarchically understood world view space was the chief category of interpretation. Typologically, one might picture this period of theological productivity as issuing in a kind of "space above space" construct. At the same time it must be seen that while space was the chief philosophical and theological category, there was not an absence of consideration of the temporal theme. The temporal character of faith is to be seen in Augustine's production of what was actually the first major theological treatise on history to be produced in the West. Augustine understood the movement of history along a temporal linear line from creation to the final consummation. The spatial character of his thinking is to be found between the temporal points of beginning and end. This can be seen in Augustine's understanding of the "two cities." Here the heavenly city is the transcendent, eternal realm, while the city of the world is transient and permeated with shadowy imperfection. Within the space of the city of the world is to be found the Church which is a temporary extension of the eternal city. Actually Augustine's "space above space" world view in the "two cities" played itself off horizontally as the Church set over against the _saeculum_. While Augustine did not fall victim to Neoplatonism's serious depreciation of the material world, at the same time he viewed man's worldly involvement as one which was seriously marked by evil as this was found in the will's prideful embrace of the world. The Church's "conversionist" attitude toward the world consisted in bringing man within the sphere of the Church to prepare him from his departure from the world. Within the Church this preparation manifested itself in monasticism and a dual ethic predicated upon a hierarchical world view. The ascetic emphasis implicit within this hierarchical structure tended to depreciate the natural, the world, the _saeculum_ in such a manner that in the perspective of the end-time the _saeculum_ was not to be redeemed but annihilated.

The same hierarchical intention is to be found in Thomas Aquinas in his contrast and synthesis of nature and grace. The lower space was assigned to nature, and the upper space was assigned to grace. The two were inseparably joined together, contended Aquinas, in such a manner that one could never contradict the other. The two spaces existed in a mutually complimentary relationship. While he desired to be a truly modern man who appreciated and endeavored to understand the world and while he labored tirelessly to explicate the Scriptures in their understanding of the goodness of the natural, horizontally the space of the saeculum was always subservient to the space of grace, i.e., the church. This has caused some modern Roman Catholic scholars to see in the medieval synthesis a refusal to allow the world to be the world, and this amounted to a recapitulation of the Monophysitic heresy.[1] In the end, the saeculum to which Aquinas wanted to give a relative autonomy actually was forced to surrender that autonomy within the structure of the medieval synthesis.

c) The Protestant Reformation

The Protestant Reformation with its re-discovery of the Bible marked a return to the basically prophetic understanding of history. This historical consciousness was rooted in the temporal understanding of man's existence under the sovereignty of God who exercised his Lordship as a Lordship over history. Both in Luther and in Calvin this sovereign Lordship found its meaning and locus in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The temporal significance of the Incarnation liberated man from the older hierarchical structure, and man was freed to follow the Lord of time wherever He led man in the saeculum. The two realms of Luther were certainly spaces, but these spaces were not statically conceived but were rather dynamic distinctions between the "right hand"

---

1. Alfons Auer, op. cit., pp. 9, 15.

of God's activity and the "left hand" of the same divine activity. The church and the world in Calvin's thought were not dichotomized into two spaces. Actually one space existed dialectically and dynamically within the other space. In both Luther and Calvin a necessary distinction was made, but the sovereign Lordship of God in Christ held the two realms in Luther and the church-world relationship in Calvin in dialectical unity. That this is true can be seen in the congruence of thought in both of the Reformers in regard to the Christian's vocation or calling. The calling was always to a function within the *saeculum*. The medieval hierarchical structure had been desacralized or de-sacramentalized, and man had been set free for the *saeculum*. The distinctions between the two were made, but the dichotomies between secular and sacred were no longer effective.

The reversion to the static distinctions between nature and grace in the post-reformation period of orthodoxy prompted the emergence of Protestant and specifically Lutheran pietism as a counter-action to the new scholasticism. This response, however, did not offer a possibility for a proper recovery of the *saeculum*. Rather than a medieval hierarchical structure, pietism resorted to a static distinction between the inner and outer aspects of human life and religious experience. Pietism was in essence a turning from the *saeculum* and a retreat to the conventicle which was set apart from the secular order.

The response to the *Aufklärung* in the thought of Schleiermacher was founded upon a conviction congruent with pietism's central concern, i.e., pious or dependent feeling. Such a base for theology amounted to anchoring theology in either a religious or psychological space of "the feeling of absolute dependence." Because it was difficult in Schleiermacher to make a distinction between the world and God, the dialectical relationship of the Creator with His creation was obscured. As for the believer, God was the space of man's mystical comprehension of his dependence upon the All or the World or God. Schleiermacher was not oblivious to the temporal character of Christian existence however. He contended that the mystical or pious experience always issued in an outer activity in the *saeculum*. The difficulty, however, was to account for what he claimed was an inner logic of the pious feeling always to move from passivity to activity. As has been seen, Schleiermacher was not able to offer a convincing argument that passivity leads logically and necessarily to activity. A theological understanding of the *saeculum* was once again in jeopardy.

It should be stressed that the spatial motif employed in this summary fails at many points to do justice to the historical circumstances in which these various seminal responses to the *saeculum* were formulated. The currents of thought and the historical circumstances of any period dictate greatly the shape of the theological response in that period. The criticisms which have been offered of these periods are made with the conviction that a radically new period confronts contemporary theology and the contemporary church. The history of faith, as the preceding historical *excursus* could be called, serves to remind the theologian that faith is not the acceptance of ready-made positions of the past or eternal truths discovered in one period and preserved for static impartation or emulation in another period. Each period must make its own response to the saeculum in the light of factors which are peculiar to that particular period. This does not mean that the response in a new period is made de novo and without regard for the past. The same problems may arise again and do arise, but the new historical circumstances present new materials and insights for dealing with those problems in a new era. Dialogue with the past is still necessary or else:

> . . . theology might find the sons of today proving tomorrow to be enthusiastic rediscoverers and perhaps avengers of their grandfathers. The work of overcoming past weaknesses and errors, a work which was perhaps only apparently completed, would then have to begin all over again. May the good Lord preserve us from that.[1]

The problem of how to speak of a transcendent God in the midst of the saeculum is as present now as it was for Augustine when he wrote the City of God. The problem of giving due consideration to nature as a theological category is still as pressing a problem as it was for Thomas Aquinas. A serious reckoning with the "cultured despisers of religion" is even more demanding in the contemporary era than it was in the time of Schleiermacher. The modern theologian is still at the same task as the thinkers of the past. Others must take up the task with the same confidence as that voiced by Paul van Buren at the conclusion of an essay in which he tries a secular restatement of Christology:

---

[1] Karl Barth, Evangelical Theology: An Introduction, trans. Grover Foley (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 47.

> We stand together with the Fathers. What divides us is the difference between the Fifth and the Twentieth centuries, not a matter of faith.[1]

The contemporary theologians to be considered in the following chapters of this dissertation stand within the Reformation tradition and more specifically within the Lutheran context. Their peculiar approaches to the problem of a theological understanding of the secular will owe more to Luther, and secondarily to Calvin, than to the other figures surveyed above. The problems of the two realms, the relationship of law and gospel, and the doctrine of Christian vocation as this is now expressed in terms of Christian ethics will be their problems as they were with the Reformers. That which divides them from the Reformers is not theology nor faith, but a radically new situation. What are the essential factors of the new time confronting the theologian? What will be his response as he seeks to speak in a new way to the perennial problem of theology's relationship to the *saeculum*?

6. The Twentieth Century Situation

The twentieth century has witnessed what may be described as the crisis of secularism. The movements of secularization in the physical sciences, political development and general social and cultural mentality have gone their ways, and theology finds itself required to speak to the new situation if it is to present to modern man a viable option for contemporary meaning. Theology must speak to this new situation with a sense of responsibility to the past and, at the same time, a willingness to venture into new and as yet unexplored territories. The preceding historical survey has attempted to reveal some of the seminal responses of the past, to indicate some of the problems encountered with those responses, and to demonstrate that the problem of a Christian understanding of the secular is actually an "enduring problem" which must be addressed anew in each situation. It is, therefore, highly advisable that a brief assessment of some of the major factors of the early twentieth century be taken into account before discussing the work of the three theologians who have made major contributions to the theological discussion concerning secularization and secularism. Since these theologians worked within the context of the German scene, the following treatment will deal with only those factors pertaining directly to this particular context.

---

[1] Paul van Buren, "The Secular Meaning of the Gospel," *Episcopal Theological School Journal*, XVII, No. 3 (Easter 1962), p. 23.

a) The Political Crisis

World War I ended for the European and particularly the German mind the era of optimistic hope in historical progress. A new, radical despair swept over the German nation. This new temper found a spokesman in the figure of Oswald Spengler.[1] In Spengler's major work is to be found not only a radical historical relativism, but also "the chilly wind of twentieth-century pessimism."[2] Spengler rejected the idea of progress in history and held rather to a theory of culture cycles each of which was to exist approximately one thousand years. Each cycle was to go through what is essentially the rotation of the seasons, and with the publication of his major work in 1918 Spengler hailed the approach of winter or death of western civilization. Reflecting the relativism of Wilhelm Dilthey and the irrationalism of Friedrich Nietzsche, Spengler found many receptive readers and advocates. As his work related to theology, Spengler insisted that religion is always relative to the cultural situation in which it is found. With the "decline of the west" would come also the eventual end of the Christian religion.[1]

---

[1] Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1929).

[2] John Macquarrie, Twentieth Century Religious Thought (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 125.

Such pessimism, whether found in the popular mind or in the theories of the philosopher of history, could not remain unrelieved for long. In spite of the shock of defeat in 1918 and the resulting despair, Germany soon was to see the rise of a new nationalism which would grip both church and nation. In 1919 under the leadership of Adolf Hitler the National Socialist Party emerged on the German scene.[2] Its basic concept was race. Hence, there came to be the modern cult of "Blut und Boden." The manifesto was contained in Hitler's own

---

[1] Of the three theologians to be considered in the following chapters, Karl Heim and Friedrich Gogarten gave closer attention to the pessimism of Spengler than did Bonhoeffer. See particularly, Heim, Oswald Spengler und das Christentum (München: C. H. Bech'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Oskar Beck, 1921).

[2] See R. D. Butler, The Roots of National Socialism 1783-1933 (London: Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1941) and Konrad Heiden, A History of National Socialism (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1935).

Mein Kampf.[1] The German people were called to the task of being the Herrenrasse under the leadership of the Führer. The evangelical church was not isolated from this new historical development, but it was summoned to lend support to and to create national solidarity. Such support Hitler called "positive Christianity," and members of the church gave their response by forming in 1932 what was called the "Faith Movement of 'German Christians' " (Glaubensbewegung deutscher Christen).[2] That the German Christian Movement was in essence an attempt to secularize the church can be seen in that its main objectives were identical to those of the National Socialist Party, and these objectives were framed with little attention to a theological basis. Their advocacy of "positive Christianity" consisted in joining with the state in opposition to Marxism, the Jews, internationalism, and Free Masonry. They also called for the preservation of the purity of the Arian race.[3] In these points it can be seen that their program was essentially the program of the Nazi state.

The German evangelical theologian was confronted with one of the most sinister forms of secularism, and in the form of the German Christian Movement he found this secularism within the evangelical church itself. In order to meet the threat of the secularizing of the church by the German Christians a Confessing Church was established and in

---

[1] Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1943).

[2] See the historical treatment of this movement in Arthur C. Cochrane, The Church's Confession under Hitler (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 74-89.

[3] See Wilhelm Hauer, Karl Heim, Karl Adam, Germany's New Religion, trans. T. S. K. Scott-Craig and R. E. Davies (New York: Abindgon Press, 1937.

March of 1934 these churchmen formed what was called a "Confessional Fellowship of the German Evangelical Church." German theological productivity during the 1930's was almost exclusively concentrated upon the church's struggle with National Socialism as a political force from without and the German Christian Movement as a secularizing force from within.[1]

The rise of National Socialism and the resultant threat to the church provided witness to one of the most potent secularistic challenges which the German church had ever faced. That such a situation would leave an indelible impression on German theological activity is understandable. The German church would have to face anew the old dilemma of Luther in determining the proper relationship between church and state. In facing this issue the theologian would of necessity be confronted with such theological concerns as "orders" of creation, natural theology, the relationship between law and Gospel -- all of which are subsumed under Niebuhr's phrase -- the relationship of Christ and culture.

b) The Crisis in the Sciences

While the political situation offered the general social and

---

1. Of the theologians to be examined in this dissertation only Gogarten aligned himself with the secularizing movement of the German Christians. Gogarten, however, withdrew from the movement in 1933 and refused to give support to the "Germanizing" of Christianity. Karl Heim from the outset opposed the encroachment of National Socialism upon the church. See his significant treatise, Deutsche Staatsreligion oder evangelische Volkskirche (Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1933). The role which Dietrich Bonhoeffer played in the Confessing Church is recounted in Chapter IV of this dissertation.

cultural context for the German theological scene, other more theoretical issues were likewise at stake. Among these was the crisis which confronted the twentieth century in the area of the physical sciences. The nineteenth century had comfortably assumed that Newtonian physics presented an absolutely true picture of nature. The universe could be explained on the basis of absolute object, absolute space and time, and absolute causation. In short, the universe could be explained mechanistically. Newton's theories had been up-dated with Laplacean determinism and more refined definitions of materialism.

With the advent of the twentieth century this picture changed radically. The dramatic break in the older deterministic, materialistic view of the universe came in 1900 when Max Planck posited the so-called "quantum-jump" theory. This was followed in 1913 by the new view of the nature of the atom as put forth by Niels Bohr. Heisenberg followed with the theory of complementarity and the "uncertainty-principle." These and other discoveries in the physical sciences amounted to what B. Bavink called "the liquidation of materialism."[1]

These reversals in the field of physics created new possibilities and new dilemmas for the philosopher and theologian. While determinism as such still was not to be called in question, Laplacean determinism had certainly become untenable. What was unquestionably obvious was that no longer could the issue of determinism be demonstrated in terms of matter. In essence, the physical sciences and the philosophical and theological disciplines had now an unparalleled opportunity for mutual dialogue and exchange. It was Karl Heim who saw that much of the modern secularistic spirit rested upon out-dated scientific world views. With the crisis in the physical sciences, Heim addressed himself to this new situation and sought on the basis of the new developments in the physical sciences to posit a new world view which would replace the older scientific world views. Heim's dialogue with the physical sciences and his attack upon secularism were brought into focus with his positing of nonobjectifiable dimensions which were fundamental to his new world view.[1]

---

[1] Quoted in Karl Heim, The Transformation of the Scientific World View, trans. W. A. Whitehouse (London: S.C.M. Press, 1953), p. 34.

c) The Existential Crisis

The twentieth century European philosophical climate has been characterized by two major movements which strangely moved in opposing directions. One movement was positivism originating with the Vienna Circle of the logical positivists and eventuating in the refinements of analytical philosophy as propagated by such figures as Ludwig Wittgenstein and A. J. Ayer. The other movement was existentialism which in its variety of forms invoked the name of Sören Kierkegaard as the father of the movement.[2] Within the German scene existentialism lent itself to the theological enterprise with more profitable results

---

1. For a complete assessment of Heim's apologetic project, see Chapter III of this dissertation.
2. See I. M. Bochenski, Contemporary European Philosophy, trans. Donald Nicholl and Karl Aschenbrenner (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1956), pp. 52-60, 154-200.

than did positivism in its several forms. Two of the twentieth century theologians to be treated in this dissertation, Gogarten and Heim, entered into theological dialogue with this particular philosophical movement.

While it is impossible to claim that existentialism is a school or system of classical philosophical style, yet certain common features can be found throughout the various forms of this movement. From the theological perspective the philosophers Martin Heidegger and Martin Buber have been more influential than any others. It would be well to summarize certain major emphases of these two figures of existentialism as these emphases became pronounced in the theological efforts of Heim and Gogarten.

1) The most common characteristic of existentialism is its emphasis upon the primacy of existence in contrast to classical philosophy's insistence upon the primacy of essence. What is meant by the primacy of existence varies with the philosopher under consideration. For Heidegger existence means basically a "propulsion toward death,"[1] whereas for Buber existence meant a being called forth by relationship with the "Thou."[2] In both cases, existence is the basal ground from which man discovers his own authenticity which only he, as Kierkegaard called, "the solitary one," can discover for himself and for which only he can assume responsibility.

---

1. Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).
2. Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937).

2) This existence is characterized in the case of Heidegger as an inexplicable "thereness" (Dasein), and in the case of Buber as a relationship which can be accounted for only as a "grace" or gift. In either case, the emphasis is placed upon man's being his existence -- man does not possess an existence, he is his existence. If man has an essence, either this essence is his existence or it is the consequence of his existence.

3) Existence is always a becoming; it is never static. In Heidegger existence is always a pro-jection toward the future. For Buber the "it" is the objectified past while the "Thou" is the present (Gegenwart) or the possible future. In this sense all existentialists insist that existence is the same as temporality.

4) Existence is subjectivity, but this subjectivity is not the equivalent of the ego-centric predicament frequently spoken of in German idealism. The existentialist emphasis on subjectivity is an emphasis on man's creative responsibility for his existence. Man creates himself freely, and therefore he is his freedom.

5) The existentialist's emphasis on subjectivity does not imply that the individual is closed in upon himself. Indeed, the individual does not really experience his subjective freedom unless he is open to the world and most important of all to the "other person." In other words, man experiences in his existence a dependence upon or an attraction to both the world and the "other person." It is only as man experiences his relationship to the world that he truly discovers his "situation," and it is only as he discovers the "other person" that he

can truly discover his own authenticity. Heidegger's term is "togetherness," whereas Buber's term for the same reality is "Thou."

6) Existentialism is finally characterized as the attempt to transcend the Cartesian subject-object dichotomy. Real or genuine knowledge is that knowledge or "meeting" which lies beyond the realm of objectification. Knowledge is not to be obtained simply through objective factual analysis, but genuine knowledge will be found in the area of encounter which defies propositional objectification.

Following these major insights of existentialism Heim utilized the inter-personalism of Buber to depict God as the irreducible and unique wholly Other. In other words, Buber's delineation of the existential-ontological relations of I-It and I-Thou afforded Heim the means of speaking of the transcendence of God in a nonobjectifiable manner. In this manner Heim sought to project of new Weltanschauung which could speak of the transcendence of God in an increasing secularistic age. The crisis of secularism for Heim was the crisis of transcendence, and the nonobjectifiable I-Thou relation became the basis on which a new expression of transcendence could be predicated.

Gogarten, on the other hand, addressed himself to a typical existential concern, i.e., man's historicity. Modern thought, particularly as it is molded by modern science, has made the world an object independent of man, and this form of objectification threatens to destroy man's real historicity, i.e., man's sense of createdness and his sense of responsibility for the world. In a more radical manner than Heim, Gogarten has sought to overcome the problems of objectification by insisting upon the radical historical nature of man. The only means for man to recover his authenticity or historicity is to discover in faith that Word which calls him out of nothingness into being. Man's hope does not lie in "facticity" but rather in a new discovery of his true subjectivity. By this anthropological route Gogarten seeks to elucidate the meaning of the Christian faith for modern man and to show to modern man that only within the Christian context can he be related to the world and to the neighbor without a deification or sacralizing of both.

In the figures of Karl Heim and Friedrich Gogarten one sees two divergent attempts of theology to reckon with the philosophical currents of existentialism. In Gogarten the existentialist categories are employed to frame a new theological anthropology, and in this manner Gogarten has stood closer to the work of Rudolf Bultmann than any other German theologian. In Heim the existentialist categories are employed to make possible a new understanding of the transcendence of God, and in this sense Heim has stood closer to traditional Lutheranism than any of his German contemporaries outside the circle of the confessional Lutherans. In the work of both theologians the attempt has been to address modern secular man caught in the twentieth century crisis of secularism.

d) The Theological Crisis

The year 1918 marks dramatically the appearance of a theological revolt in German and European Protestant theology. In this year Karl

Barth published his Epistle to the Romans[1] which brought forth an attack upon the prevalent liberal theological trends rooting in the tradition of Albrecht Ritschl through to Wilhelm Hermann. Barth's early work showed the influences of a new encounter with the "strange world" of the Bible and with the philosophical insights of Søren Kierkegaard. The new theological revolt found its focus in the newly established journal, _Zwischen den Zeiten_, published by Barth with the aid of other theologians such as Eduard Thurneysen, Emil Brunner, Friedrich Gogarten and Rudolf Bultmann. This movement was frequently referred to as the "dialectical theology." Later it was referred to as "The Theology of Crisis," taking the name from one of Brunner's works.

The movement of dialectical theology set itself consciously against the various forms of subjectivism found in the prevalent liberal theological tradition as this expressed itself in concerns for religious intuition, human psychology and man's pious states founded on the "religious _a priori_." The wholly otherness of God was stressed in opposition to any form of immanence, and the supremacy of God's revelation in Jesus Christ was asserted to be man's means of knowledge of God.

Barth disclaimed any intention to found a school or system of theology, and within the group which surrounded the journal, _Zwischen den Zeiten_, there was considerable latitude of theological opinion.

---

[1] Karl Barth, _The Epistle to the Romans_, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933).

Barth, himself, steadily altered his course from the period of the publication of The Epistle to the Romans (1918) through his study of Anselm's theology (1931)[1] up to his major theological effort in the Church Dogmatics.

In spite of the various shades of opinion in the movement of dialectical theology, this movement represented a concerted attack upon the theological tendencies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Protestant liberalism. In its various shades and forms, the dialectical theology fast became the catalyst for all theological effort on the Protestant European scene.

The three theologians to be considered in the following chapters must of necessity be viewed against the background of this particular theological movement. Karl Heim was never identified with the movement as such, though many of his theological concerns were likewise concerns of the dialectical theologians. Heim had early set his course in the direction of an apologetics, and he steadfastly continued this course in spite of the objections raised by Barth and others to apologetics as a theological discipline. Gogarten was one of the earliest participants in the dialectical movement, but his concern with a theological anthropology as a prologomenon to theology proper brought forth a decisive break with Barth in 1933. The political scene and the church struggle served to intensify this break. Bonhoeffer, on the other hand, was early attracted to Barth's theology, and the

---

1. Karl Barth, Anselm: Fides quaerens intellectum, trans. I. W. Robertson (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1960).

Christological concentration which marked Barth's theology from 1931 until the present left its unmistakable stamp on Bonhoeffer. While the form of Christology was different in Bonhoeffer from that in Barth, the relentless emphasis upon the Christological question was still central. Of the three theologians to be considered in the following chapters, Bonhoeffer stood in closer proximity to Barth's theology than did Heim or Gogarten.

e) The Secular Crisis

It was not until the advent of the twentieth century that the full force of secularism and secularization was felt on the historical scene. The term "secularism" is difficult to define and has been used so imprecisely that it speaks of much and nothing at the same moment. The cultural phenomenon of secularism mentioned here is broadly defined as follows:

> Today we interpret secularism (Latin: *saeculum* - age, or temporal or earthly life) in a very general way as a world and philosophy of life set free from the Christian faith and originating out of a spirit of innerworldliness.[1]

Every definition seems to beg the question. Perhaps the best definition so far suggested and certainly the one in widest circulation in contemporary discussions is offered by Charles West. This definition is more embracive, including the withdrawal from "metaphysical control" as well. This introduces an element of controversy, since it implies

---

1. Hans Heinrich Wolf, "Säkularismus," *Evangelischer Soziallexikon* (Stuttgart: Kreuz-Verlag, 1954), p. 878.

two stages of development. The writer would agree with West in this analysis, but many so-called secularists would consider that secularization is only concerned with deliverance from the aegis of theology.

> Secularism is the withdrawal of ares of thought and life from religious -- and finally also from metaphysical -- control, and the attempt to understand and live in these areas in the terms which they alone offer.[1]

It is this phenomenon which the twentieth century has witnessed penetrating into virtually all areas of life with a persistent pervasiveness. The twentieth century witnessed this, not as it had been a century before as an intellectual revolt against theology's domination by the sciences, but in many other and more subtle expressions. The twentieth century did not witness it simply as Roman Catholicism since the fall of the *corpus christianum* had seen it as a collapse of ecclesiastical totalitarianism.[2] In the twenteith century it was not simply a "practical atheism" as it had been in Schleiermacher's day, while in many quarters it still continued to be this. In the twentieth century secularism became conscious of itself as a literating movement throwing off the shackles of theology and metaphysics. The opening sentence of Fritz Mauthner's four-volume history of atheism in the

---

[1] Charles West, in a mimeographed account of the proceedings of a study conference sponsored by the World Council of Churches at Bossey, Switzerland, on "The Meaning of the Secular" in September 1959.

[2] See S. Reicke, "Säkularisation," *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Band V (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1961), 1280-1288. See also a similar account of the "secularization" of churchly prerogatives in G. Dichel, "Säkularisation," *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon*, ed. Heinz Brunotte und Otto Weber (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1959), pp. 764-768.

West summarizes the self-conscious spirit of secularism: "God has died. The time has come to write His history."[1]

Generally historical analysts have found two major causes of the modern phenomenon of secularism. The first has been in man's scientific world view -- the view of a closed universe operating strictly on the foundation of Newtonian physics. This marked what Max Weber called the "disenchantment of the world."

> The tension between religion and intellectual knowledge definitely comes to the fore wherever rational, empirical knowledge has consistently worked through to the disenchantment of the world and its transformation into a causal mechanism. . . . In principle, the empirical as well as the mathematically oriented view of the world develops refutations of every intellectual approach which in any way asks for a "meaning" or inner-worldly occurrences. Every increase of rationalism in empirical science increasingly pushes religion from the rational into the irrational realm; but only today does religion become the irrational or anti-rational supra-human power.[2]

The second cause has frequently been described as the emergence of the technological society. This is what has been referred to as

> . . . the domination of life by means; the rule of technique over human good, the transformation of communication into propaganda, the rule of production over the purposes of human life.[3]

---

1. Fritz Mauthner, Der Atheismus und seine Geschichte, I (Stuttgart and Berlin: 1920-1923).
2. Max Weber, From Max Weber, ed. and trans. H. H. Girth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948, pp. 350-51.
3. Gibson Winter, The New Creation as Metropolis (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), p. 51. See the fullest treatment of the sociological dimensions of the advent of the technological age in Jacques Ellul, The Technological Society, trans. John Wilkinson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964).

Others have seen secularism rooted in the protests against the historic Christian Church. The anti-clericalism of Renaissance France is one prime example. The protest has had a much wider and more general point of address, however; it has been a protest against the intolerance, otherworldliness, and inhumanity frequently perpetrated by the institution of the Church. In other words, this view is that secularism is rooted in the rising tides of humanism. Historically, secularism as a self-conscious movement began in this fashion with the charter of its organization having been written in 1845 by G. J. Holyoake, who regarded the rationale of his movement as

> . . . the doctrine that morality should be based solely in regard to the well-being of mankind in the present life, to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or in future life.[1]

These so-called origins are in actuality only the symptoms of secularism. Secularism had existed long before the advent of Newtonian physics, the captivity of society by machines and results, or the optimistic humanism of G. J. Holyoake and his "secularists." The truth of the matter is that "secularism" is a cultural phenomenon of the Christian western world.[2] It has been an indigeneous movement only on Christian western soil. Secularism in its twentieth-century form originated in that part of the world which was influenced by the biblical view of the relationship between God, man, and the world. Within this view there is no possibility for an identification of man and God or the world and God. The biblical doctrine of creation separates the two in a clearly distinguishable manner. Man is created by God to govern the physical world, and man in his rebellion resents the fact that this is a stewardship relationship. Man mistakes his relative autonomy for an absolute autonomy. He then becomes the "friend of the world" who is in "enmity with God."[1] Secularism, as a distortion of the genuinely secular, claims the world for itself and invests man with the autonomous position of "lord of all things." Secularism, it might then be argued, is not so much a new heathen philosophy but a Christian heresy. There are basic differences in approach in terms of Christian thought and strategy depending on whether the Christian Church is addressing that which is alien to its faith or that which is a distortion of the basic nature of the faith.

---

[1] G. J. Holyoake, Secularism, the Practical Philosophy of the People (London: Watts, 1845), p. 7.

[2] Certainly, secularism is found in the non-western world in many forms and is growing with rapidity. This is due to the importation of modern scientific views and especially the importation of modern scientific "technique."

The problem of the secular in the twentieth century is precisely this problem of understanding the difference between "secularism" and the "secular" or "secularity." If Christian thought mistakes the nature of secularism, its theological approach to the issue will be in itself, likewise, a distortion of the faith. With the spirit of secularism permeating the dynamic movements of the twentieth century, e.g., nationalism, technology and race, it would be a very easy thing for Christian thinkers to mistake the origins of this movement and treat

---

1. James 4:4.

the movement as a force completely alien and extraneous to the Christian tradition. The major focus of the following chapters will be to see the particular manner in which each of the selected theologians has responded to this occurrence in the twentieth century crisis.

7. The Theological Mandate

The preceding survey of western Christian thought reveals one outstanding fact. From the earliest times and with few periods of exception the word "secular" has been clouded with suspicion in Christian theology and the Christian church. Unfortunately, as can be seen in many modern pronouncements, the fight against secularism has made the church shy of the "secular." Likewise, the fight against secularism generally has not sought the roots of the movement with sufficient depth to discover that secularism is an indigenous heresy instead of an outside opponent. This has produced two tendencies. One tendency is to attempt to phrase theology as an apologetics to the secularist. In too many instances this has succeeded in secularizing the Christian categories more than in converting the secularist. The other tendency has been to bypass the "secular" altogether -- to seal it off in a compartment unto itself. Therefore, the church stands against the world.[1] This fear of the profane (literally, that which stands before the temple -- profanum) has become one of the major contributing factors to secularized Christian thinking.

---

[1] See The Church Against the World, ed. Reinhold Niebuhr, Wilhelm Pauck, and Francis P. Miller (Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co., 1935).

One of the major marks of an advanced technological society with its means of mass organization, in short, one of the earmarks of a secularistic age is compartmentalization. Such compartmentalization is frequently transferred to the disciplines of thought and particularly to the discipline of Christian theology. One of the great dangers of Christian theology in the West, as this survey has shown, is that it more frequently than not has participated in a kind of illicit "sphere-thinking," e.g., the "religious sphere" *versus* the "secular sphere." Such "sphere thinking" is a cardinal characteristic of the secularistic mentality.

Is there a pass between apologetics, on the one hand, and theological "sphere-thinking" on the other? Is there a theological means of distinguishing between the heresy of secularism and the God-given *saeculum*? Is there a possibility of recovering the "secular" as a fundamental reality rooted in the basic nature of the Christian faith itself? If this is possible, that narrow pass may then be discovered, and the secular will find its proper place within the scope of Christian dogmatics and not simply as an alien *externum*.

This study now turns to three German Lutheran theologians of the contemporary period who have devoted major portions of their theological scholarship to the question of the secular and secularism.

CHAPTER III

KARL HEIM AND THE QUESTION OF THE SECULAR: SECULARISM DISPLACED

Secularism as a way of life is an established fact of the twentieth century, and with this fact the question of God has become the most crucial theological issue. Theologians tend to talk among themselves, and the so-called secularist goes his own way without any notice of the theologian. The modern secular attitude no longer is bothered with the question of God or the reality of the church. These were overt issues with an older secularism. Today the secularist is convinced "that he alone has returned to the solid ground of reality and that the rest of us are still pursuing chimeras which have long since lost their significance."[1]

Karl Heim believes this to be an accurate depiction of the twentieth century situation. If Heim is accurate in his conviction, Christian theology faces a task of greater gravity than ever in its history.

> It is the question whether for people of the present time, whose thought is shaped by the contemporary conception of the physical universe, any other philosophy is still possible than that of secularism. Does not any other outlook imply a relapse into the world-picture of our fathers which has long since been rendered obsolete by scientific research and the experience of everyday life?[2]

---

1. Karl Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, trans. N. H. Smith (London: S.C.M. Press, Ltd., 1953), p. 21.
2. Ibid., p. 25.

The theologian avoids this question and the present world situation to his own detriment:

> We have no right to raise a passionate protest against the reinterpretation of all religious and ethical fundamental concepts which secularism is undertaking and to oppose it as a rebellion against God and a human self-deification, so long as we are not in a position to propose an alternative to the overall view of reality from which this interpretation necessarily follows, another conception of the universe and one in which nature and man appear in a different light.[1]

Heim's approach is therefore an apologetic approach, but care should be exercised to distinguish this particular approach from older forms of apologetics where God and faith were reduced to fit an already established world view. Heim proposes the structuring of a new world view:

> . . . a position which does not have to be defended against scientific objections, a position from which, if the necessity should arise, we could go over from the defensive to the attack in our relations with natural science. Does any such impregnable stronghold exist? . . . That is the question on which everything depends.[2]

Heim's apologetic program in the face of the rising tides of secularism must be seen in its historical perspective with other theological currents of the time. The year 1934 marks a crucial point in the history of Christian apologetics. It was in that year that Karl Barth and Emil Brunner encountered one another on the question of general

---

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

and special revelation.[1] The debate was as influential as it was heated. At least, history to this date gives the verdict of influence to Barth. It may be that Brunner granted himself too many of Barth's presuppositions to be able to make a radical and compelling distinction from Barth's own position. It is this early position of Barth which still exerts tremendous influence in spite of a steady alternating of his theological course, as can be seen beginning with *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, III, 2.[2] The result of this massive influence has been that in large segments of Protestant Christendom "apologetics" has become a theological "bad word." It is crucially important, then, that the theological work and method of Karl Heim be viewed in this historical context. Barth's reaction to Heim's proposal of his task was typically dramatic:

> The theologian who indulges in such tricks obviously thinks he has plenty of time and authority to turn his back upon any anxiety about dogmatics and, instead of working at the matter itself, to talk with other people about the matter.[3]

The major task in this exposition of Heim's theological method is not, however, to defend his apologetics against the attacks of Barth.

---

[1] Karl Barth, "*No!*" *Natural Theology* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946), p. 128.

[2] Emil Brunner well describes that this shift in Barth's position in his article, "The New Barth," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, II, No. 3, was due to his "preoccupation" with saving grace and his lack of attention to "the grace of creation." The "new Barth" has, according to Brunner, reversed himself and is now inclined to identify saving grace and the grace of creation.

[3] Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I, 1, trans. G. T. Thompson (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936), 32.

There is a more fundamental task to be accomplished. The method which Heim employed to accomplish his desired end must be delineated, and in the light of this delineation the question must be posed whether Heim properly recovers for Christian theology the category of the "secular."

As Carl Michalson has pointed out, the task of delineating Heim's method is not a small task.[1] One is able to see evidences of Kantian epistemology, Husserlian phenomenology, Heideggerian and Buberian existentialism, and Bergsonian "vitalism" all at work in Heim's mind. These various contributory influences are consistently subservient, however, to the evangelical faith which is closer to Lutheran orthodoxy than Barth's theology. Surrounding this evangelical expression of the faith is a personal piety characteristic of the family and geographical locale of Heim's background.[2] The purpose here is to analyze the component parts of Heim's method of dealing with secularism and then to seek for the integrating principle which holds this multi-facet, theological spectrum in a complementary whole. Occasionally reference will be made to Heim's other works in order to set this central effort in proper perspective, with predominant attention given to his _magnum opus_, _Der evangelische Glaube und das_

---

1. Carl Michalson, "The Task of Apologetics in the Future (Karl Heim's Theology after Fifty Years)," _Scottish Journal of Theology_, 6 (1953), 362-378. Michalson offers an excellent catalogue of counter-opposite criticisms which have flooded the question of Heim's method.
2. This background is well documented in Heim's own spiritual autobiography, _Ich gedenke der vorigen Zeiten_ (Hamburg: Furche Verlag, 1957).

Denken der Gegenwart.[1]

A. Historical Background

The period of Barthian theological influence tended to push far into the shadows the work of the Lutheran theologian of Tübingen, Karl Heim. At first, this fact seems somewhat strange. In a striking number of instances Barth and Heim held similar positions and frequently found themselves on the same theological battlefronts. Edwyn Bevan considered Heim in 1936 with Barth as one of the two most influential European theologians prior to the rise of National Socialism.[2] Professor H. R. Mackintosh of Edinburgh consistently sent his most promising students to Tübingen for Heim's tutelage rather than to Bonn where they would have studied with Barth.[3] On closer examination, however, the prominence of Barth and the relative obscurity of Heim do not appear to be such strange phenomena. Karl Barth was the vehement prophet, "shaking men's hearts by a language which is often defiant and

---

1. This work consists of six volumes published separately under the general title, Der evangelische Glaube und das Denken der Gegenwart (Hamburg: Furche-Verlag). Band I: Glaube und Denken (1, Aufl., 1931; 3. Aufl., 1933; 5. Aufl., 1952). Band II: Jesus der Herr (3. Aufl., 1955). Band III: Jesus der Weltvollender (3. Aufl., 1952). Band IV: Der christliche Gottesglaube und die Naturwissenschaft (2. Aufl., 1951). Band V: Die Wandlung im Naturwissenschaftlichen Weltbild (2. Aufl., 1953). Band VI: Weltschöpfung und Weltende (2. Aufl., 1958). Unless otherwise noted the material in the following section is taken from the English translation of the above mentioned editions.
2. Edwyn Bevan, "Introduction," to Heim, God Transcendent, trans. E. P. Dickie (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. v. This translation is from the third edition of Heim's Glaube und Denken.
3. This information was related in a personal conversation with Professor E. P. Dickie, University of St. Andrews, Scotland, 1960.

violent in paradox."[1] On the other hand, Karl Heim was what Walter Marshall Horton has called a "mediating theologian."[2] From the beginning of his academic career in 1902 until his death in 1958 Heim steadily pursued a course of thought which found itself always on the boundary lines between philosophy and theology, science and the *kerygma*, "secularism"[3] and Christian apologetics, the practical concerns of the Student Christian Movement (in which he served as chief assistant to John R. Mott[4]) and the Christian faith's competition with contemporary world views. He was at once an academic theologian and an evangelist to the "secularistic" age.

Born in 1884 in the pietistic setting of Württemberg, Heim lived through the chaotic eras of German history which saw Spenglerian nihilism, the First World War, an attempted Communist *coup*, and finally the Nazi revolution and the ensuing Second World War.[5] In all of this the pietistic certainty and evangelical fervor which had surrounded him in Württemberg held the theological concerns of Heim to the task of forging a Christian apologetic for the twentieth century.[6]

---

[1] Bevan, *loc. cit.*

[2] Walter Marshall Horton, *Contemporary Continental Theology* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1938), p. 127.

[3] This term is placed in quotation marks because of the technical precision with which Heim uses it. The distinction will be explained in the following pages of this chapter.

[4] Heim, *Ich gedenke der vorigen Zeiten*, pp. 66-88. Cf. also Friedrich Hauss, *Karl Heim: Der Denker des Glaubens* (Giessen: Brunnen-Verlag, 1960), pp. 16-29.

[5] Friedrich Hauss, *Väter der Christenheit* (Wuppertal: Verlag Sonne und Schild, 1959), pp. 203-208.

[6] This is well attested in Hauss, *ibid.*, and particular notice should be given to the lines of relationship which Hauss traces between Heim's pietistic background and the British and American Brethern and Methodist pietism.

B. The Apologetic Method

Alan Richardson makes a distinction between "apology" and "apologetics" in the context of Christian dialogue. "Apology" is the effort of the Christian theologian or Christian community to persuade the world to accept a particular belief or position. "Apologetics" is the discipline whereby the Christian community in conversation with itself takes "stock" of the contemporary world. By critical analysis of that world the Christian community then endeavors to place its language, systematize its doctrine and meet the world in a relevant conversation.[1] This is a helpful distinction for the following task. The work of Heim falls into both categories, but he is careful to make the same distinctions as Richardson makes. It is in this light that we can see the two-fold method operative in Heim's work.[2]

1. Phenomenological Analysis

In the first phase of his method Heim is concerned to analyze the cultural phenomenon of the contemporary world and by his critical analysis to cut through the surface phenomenon to reveal its true nature. This true nature he finds to be the "pure secularism" upon which the Greek world erected its Platonic Weltanschauung; upon which the medieval world structured its ecclesiastical Weltanschauung; and upon which the modern world has fabricated its *Weltanschauungen* of nihilism, the "Blut und Boden" cult of Naziism, the economic determinism of Communism, and the scientism of the popular mind.[1] Edward Farley is correct in stating that Heim "attempts a continual dialogue with whatever crisis is current at the time,"[2] but the metaphysical problem never changes with each cultural crisis in the theology of Heim. While the dialogue is always effected in the context of the immediate *Weltanschauung*, the metaphysical problem is always that of establishing the possibility of speaking meaningfully of the Christian faith as an alternative to the presuppositions of a particular *Weltanschauung*, i.e., as an alternative to "pure secularism." Heim, therefore, in this first phase of his apologetic method analyzes cultural phenomena and reveals these for what they are, i.e., false gods, idolatries.[3] In this respect Heim sees the contemporary Christian in a situation similar to that

---

[1] Alan Richardson, Christian Apologetics (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), pp. 7-24.

[2] Cf. Francis Burger, Karl Heim as Apologeet (Franeker, Netherlands: T. Wever, 1954). Burger consistently makes the distinctions between Heim's role as a creator of a new apologetics and the task of "apology."

---

1. Heim sees these *Weltanschauungen* as made possible by the "old metaphysic" which has run its course from the Greeks to Husserl. The 'old metaphysic" received its most accentuated form in the period from Descartes to Husserl. *Die Cartesianische Bewusstseinsphilosophie*, of which *Apriorismus*, *Empirismus*, *Positismus* *Hegelianismus*, *Realismus*, and *Phäanomenologie* were "only variations of the same theme." Heim, *Glaube und Denken* (1. Aufl., Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1931), pp. 26-27.
2. Edward Farley, *The Transcendence of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1931), pp. 26-27.
3. In his refusal to equate God with any aspect of the world-process and to affirm that any such equation is "idolatry," Heim pre-dated Barth in this most familiar emphasis of Barthian theology. As early as 1915 Heim was suggesting the use of "phenomenological analysis" to unmask "immanental idolatries." Cf. Heim, "Die Aufgabe der Apologetik in der Gegenwart," *Glaube und Leben: Gesammelte Aufsätze und Vorträge* (Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1926), pp. 157-180. In one of his last writings he was still pursuing this same course. Cf. Heim, "Christian Faith and the Growing Power of Secularism," *Religion and Culture*, ed. Walter Leibrecht, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 181-195.

which existed in the first centuries of the Christian era,

> . . . when the sun had set on the gods of the ancient Greek world and they had begun to die. At that time the messengers of Jesus were called atheists (*atheoi*). They deprived the world of its gods, in order to prepare a place for the living God. In the present situation Christians should follow the precedent of the early Church: they should join those who deprive the world of its gods and who oppose all man's attempts to claim for himself and for his world the eternity and absoluteness which belong to God alone. In other words, *contemporary Christians should support those who relativize world and man.*[1]

Contemporary culture cannot be left in a godless vacuum, nor can it be left with a cleft between a Christian proclamation and a secular *Weltanschauung*. It is at this juncture that the real, constructive process of a new Christian apologetics begins for Heim.[2] It is at this precise methodological location that the transition is effected from "apology" to "apologetics." The new materials derived from a critical analysis of secular culture must be employed in a reconstruction issuing in a total world view, a Christian metaphysic.[3] What is new in this approach? The old apologetics building on the "old metaphysic" saw a line of continuity between secular culture and the Christian apologetic reconstruction. This is not the intention of Heim. Rather, these new materials derived from such a cultural analysis must be used to reconstruct a meaningful *distinction between* the Transcendent and everything else. Before proceeding with Heim's reconstruction we shall direct closer attention to that particular facet of culture which Heim selects to analyze. Heim turns his attention to the scientific _Weltanschauungen_.

---

[1] Heim, "Christian Faith and the Growing Power of Secularism," p. 194.

[2] Burger claims this as the only new development in Christian apologetics in this century. Cf. Burger, *Karl Heim as Apologeet*, pp. 101-103.

[3] This is Heim's expressed intention. Cf. Heim's title, *Glaube und Denken: Philosophische Grundlegung einer christlichen Lebensanschauung*.

a) The Death of the Pre-Copernican World

In the pre-Copernican world "pure secularism" was harnessed and restrained. As long as the universe could be held to be definitely centered and existing in a definite space, "secularism" and nihilism had little chance. Given the pre-Copernican world view man could always argue convincingly from teleological (meaning) or cosmological (design) premises. When the breakup of this world view occurred, science, more particularly physics, was the determining factor. This breakup was not completed but only begun with Copernicus. Copernicus still kept the universe centered upon the sun and situated in an absolute space. It was Bruno who "struck the roof off" the universe, and the result was a centerless infinity.[1] The religious language of the "God beyond" raised the question: "Beyond what?" Theology had been deprived of its medieval vocabulary of transcendence.

The "pure secularism" of which Heim speaks arose now in overt form. Bruno succeeded not only in demolishing the ancient world picture (_Weltbild_), but he created the possibility for a new _Weltanschauung_. Even the old atheistic arguments were no longer valid for these arguments found it relatively simple to construct the idea of God which they were rejecting. Secular man in the new situation had no recourse except to revert to an immanentism. The history of philosophy from Bruno to the present is filled with such futile attempts at immanental world views. Heim dared to enter into specific encounter with several of these world views. The first edition of Glaube und Denken was written with Marxist Communism as the focus of attack. Only three years later Heim completely rewrote the first edition, for history had changed. The German Faith Movement predicated upon an immanentism of race and blood now demanded a critical response.[1] Whatever was the situation in which man found himself, the crisis was always one of an immanental Weltanschauung replacing the God of transcendence. The crisis of any secularism was and is the crisis of transcendence. The task of the apologist may change in terms of externals depending on the historical situation, but the basic problem of transcendence remains throughout the shifting scenes of historical movements. Heim's apologetic work reveals this situation graphically. In 1931 the apologist faced the determinism of Communism. In 1934 he faced the task of unmasking a pseudo-faith in the strength of blood and race.[2] Both were in essence immanentisms, and the continuing problem was transcendence.

---

[1] Heim, _Glaube und Denken_ (3. Aufl.; Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1934), p. 39. Cf. also Heim, _Die Wandlung im naturwissenschaftlichen Weltbild_ (Hamburg: Furche-Verlag, 1951), p. 26.

---

1. For full treatment of the German Faith Movement see Paul F. Douglass, God among the Germans (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935). For a detailed account of the church's struggle against National Socialism and the German Christians see Arthur C. Cochrane, The Church's Confession under Hitler (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962).
2. Cf. Walter Marshall Horton, Contemporary Continental Theology (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1938), pp. 113-127. Heim made a direct answer to the German Faith Movement in Deutsche Staatsreligion oder Evangelische Volkskirche (Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1933).

b) The Substitutes Offered by Newtonian Physics

Given the breakdown of the pre-Copernican world view, what then is to be offered for an answer or solution? Heim is now led to analyze the substitutes which were offered by physics and philosophy as solutions for a new world view. What is the Newtonian *Weltbild* in answer to the shock rendered the Church and the world by Copernicus and Bruno?

The Newtonian physicists offered three particular substitutes as possibilities of holding a centerless universe caught in infinite space in some kind of meaningful relationship. The *absolute object* was the first construct of Newtonian physics. This was but the re-emergence of the ancient Greek concept as phrased by Democritus. Democritus sought to explain the true nature of reality as it appears in phenomena on the basis of atoms and their motions in space. These atoms are the immutable and indestructible elements of the cosmos. "Only the atoms and the void are real. Everything else is opinion."[1] Newtonian physics sought, then, fixed matter which was nothing else than the absolute object, given from beyond ourselves, and completely independent of ourselves, or of any other object. Was this not also the purpose of Democritus? The object must exist apart from our discovering it. It was this which Kant coined as the *Ding an sich*. As long as the world could be explained as the motion of tiny, immutable, indestructible particles in interaction, no further reflection was required.

---

[1] Democritus, in *The Philosophers Speak for Themselves*, ed. T. V. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 40.

> The goal of scientific explanation thereafter was to explain all events, electrical, magnetic, capillary action, osmosis, the origin and development of organic life and of consciousness by taking them back to systems, large, small or microscopic, in which rigid bodies acted according to the principle of gravitation, either circling round one another like planets and suns, or conglomerating, or hitting one another like billiard balls.[1]

A very plaguing question could not long be suppressed. What is matter? The discovery of the "inside" of the atom, i.e., that the atom possesses two kinds of elementary particles: the positively charged protons and the electrically neutral neutrons, resulted in what Bavink called "the liquidation of materialism."[2] Around 1900 Max Planck discovered that all transmissions of energy in the universe simply did not take place continuously: *natura non facit saltus*. Contrary to past physics "nature does make jumps," and the consequence of this discovery led to the proposition of the "quantum jump." It remained for Heisenberg to "tidy up" the new discoveries in atomic physics and quantum mechanics with his "uncertainty principle." According to this theory we can specify precisely where a moving electron is, or the momentum of its motion (mass x velocity), but never both at the same time.[3] If its location is precisely determined, its momentum is

---

1. Heim, *The Transformation of the Scientific World View*, trans. W. A. Whitehouse (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1953), p. 33.
2. B. Bavink, as quoted in Heim, *ibid*., p. 34.
3. W. Heisenberg, *Physical Principles of the Quantum Theory* trans. Karl Eckhart and Frank Hoyt (New York: Dover Press, n.d.), pp. 84-122. Heisenberg offered even a fuller treatment of this theory in his unpublished Gifford Lectures, University of St. Andrews, 1960-1961. Carl von Weizsäcker has reckoned seriously with Heisenberg's principle and has sought a way out by turning to Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic in his *The History of Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959).

relegated to the realm of the unobservable, and vice versa. We are then brought to see that a physical phenomenon such as an electron or a proton is never there for itself alone, as pure object; rather it is always the case that an observer is there as well, directing his measuring instruments upon it. This calls for the recognition on the part of the physicist of an "inner space" or more precisely the non-objectifiable ego.[1] Gone now is the absolute object of Newtonian physics.

It is important to note that Heim does not leap to the refuge of quantum mechanics or "uncertainty principles" as escapes for an easy apologetic supporting arbitrary actions of a deity whose intervention through miracles in the physical world can now be supported by the inconclusive state of the atomic theory dilemma. The history of the quest for an understanding of the relation of religion and science is filled with attempts to make claims for religion on the basis of knowledge-gaps in the physical sciences. Heim points to the two results of this analysis: (1) the end to the possibility of a world view built upon the old materialistic arguments and (2) the necessity of including the observing subject, the non-objectifiable ego as a constituent of the experiment.[2]

---

[1] Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, trans. N. H. Smith (London: SCM Press, 1953), pp. 35-150.

[2] This second point later becomes the very ontological foundation upon which Heim attempts his reconstruction. This aspect of Heim's work is reflective of a whole philosophic movement in German thought after World War I. The movement led by Martin Buber, Martin Heidegger, and Eberhard Grisebach, became known as existentialism but Heim preferred the title "new ontology." The philosophic influence can be detected in the first edition of Glaubensgewissheit: Eine Untersuchung über die Lebensfrage der Religion (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1916).

The second substitute for the ancient stabilities was the positing of *absolute time* and *absolute space*. These were but two other expressions of the profound religious need not only to have something constant but also to possess the security of being "at home in a 'container'."[1] Therefore, physics sought a system of co-ordinates which would embrace *absolute time* and *absolute space*, whose origin could be centered in the cosmos, and whereby man could orientate himself in terms of spatial and temporal measurements.[2]

Such a construct could not long endure. Once the Copernican discovery had shaken man, church, and society, a new search for constancy and security had to take place in a far wider context. Copernicus, himself, had sought for stability by pointing to the solar system as the point of constancy, but with the work of Bruno as background physics soon had to resort to a hypothetical construct of an all-pervasive ether to replace Copernicus' concept of the constancy of the solar system. The fact that this was hypothetical and could claim no empirical data forced Newton to affirm *absolute space* and *absolute time* on the basis of a mathematical structure.[3] This mathematical construct began to be surrounded by questions with the advent of the classical relativity principle which insisted that rest is equivalent to uniform motion. From this position Leibnitz could attack

---

[1] Heim, *The Transformation of the Scientific World View*, p. 69.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

[3] While Heim analyzes Newton's *absolute space* and *absolute time* concept without citation or reference, his source is obviously Newton's classic, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, most probably the German translation by Cotes of 1713.

Newton's *absolute time* and *absolute space* as an *idole de quelques Anglais modernes*.[1] It was obvious to Leibnitz that when space had been emptied of things and time of motion, these became mere attributes without subjects. Vaihinger in his "Als-Ob" philosophy had sought to rectify this by placing space and time within a system of axis co-ordinates. All that could be proved by such abstract constructs was that the much-sought-for Archimedean point was not to be found in empty space; such a point could only be postulated. The stage was set for the advent of the "special relativity theory" and then the "general relativity theory" of Einstein.[2] Gone now was the refuge of *absolute space* and *absolute time*.

What, then, are the implications of this analysis of the constructs of *absolute space* and *absolute time* for apologetics? The above analysis shows that

> . . . physics has come to the point where, for the second time, it stands at the frontier across which lies the "inner space," the realm which can no longer be objectified, to which we ourselves belong in our deepest essence.[3]

We are, then, face to face with an either/or situation. We can be satisfied with where physics leaves us, resting content with mathematical formulae, i.e., we can stop at the frontier "set for objective thinking and purely scientific inquiry."[1] *Or* we can cross the frontier. To cross Heim's frontier means to come to the place where the observer becomes aware that he is not merely standing in objective time and space, but that he is existing in a space which is not objectifiable but is, in deed, the space to which the self truly belongs. This is what Professor E. P. Dickie labels as "the ego's problem of differentiation."[2]

---

[1] Leibnitz, as quoted in Heim, *The Transformation of the Scientific World View*, p. 72. The chief references for Leibnitz's rebuttal of Newton are *De Scientia Universali seu Calculo Philosophico*, *Systeme Nouveau de la Nature*, and *Principes de la Nature et de la Grace*.

[2] Cf. Heim's analysis of Einstein's theory in "Gedanken eines Theologen zu Einsteins Relativitätstheorie," *Glaube und Leben*, pp. 119-137.

[3] Heim, *The Transformation of the Scientific World View*, pp. 109-110.

The *absolute object* could not claim absolute status because of the emergence of two or more complementary pictures of that object held at the same moment but differing with the position and means of observation of the observer. These two or more pictures could be related to one another only by means of non-intuitive mathematical formulae.[3] *Absolute time* and *absolute space* lost their absoluteness when it was proved that spatio-temporal measurements were conditional on the state of motion of the observer.[4] There was one other way out: *absolute cause* or *determinism*.

The argument of *absolute cause* or *determinism* in part depended upon the first two substitutes. Once again this argument arose as an answer to a deep religious questing.

---

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

[2] *Academic* lecture, St. Mary's College, University of St. Andrews, 1960.

[3] Heim, *The Transformation of the Scientific World View*, p. 124.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

> In the last resort, the whole of philosophical speculation about causal necessity is a means by which men try to overcome the dread and uncertainty which they have about the future, whose roots are deep in our existence.[1]

With the work of physics this "philosophical faith" of *determinism*, like the previously mentioned faith constructs, was frustrated. The philosopher, Laplace, followed by Spinoza and Lessing, gave the classic formulation of *determinism*. When in 1900 Max Planck questioned whether it was possible to hold at the same time knowledge of the motion and location of a corpuscle in space, the crack in the argument of *absolute cause* became evident.[2] As has already been pointed out, quantum mechanics followed with the theory of the quantum jump, and from this came Heisenberg's "uncertainty principle." It should be pointed out that of the three substitutes for the Absolute which Heim examines more controversy centers on the third analysis than any other. The whole question of *causality* is a "live issue" in contemporary physics. While such physicists as James Jeans[3] and Ian Barbour[4] would tend to agree with Heim's third analysis, others such as Robert Dingle[5] would insist that Heim is over-zealous in his analysis and is in actuality "disarming physics" to insure a successful theological warfare.

---

1. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
2. Ernst Cassirer, *Determinism and Indeterminism in Modern Physics: Historical and Systematic Studies in the Problem of Causality*, trans. O. Theodor Benfey (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), pp. 173-196.
3. James Jeans, *Physics and Philosophy* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943).
4. Ian Barbour, "Karl Heim on Christian Faith and Natural Science," *Christian Scholar*, XXXIX, No. 3 (September 1956), 232.
5. Robert Dingle, "Review of Two Works by Karl Heim," *British Journal of Philosophy and Science*, IX, No. 2, (September 1956), 236.

Heim admits that Planck, Einstein, von Laue, and von Hartmann have all been reluctant to say with certainty where the principle of causality is called in question by modern quantum physics.[1] That causality is called in question is not so much the issue as where and to what extent.[2]

From this analysis are there any implications for the task of the apologist? Heim would answer in the negative. The positing of the theory of absolute cause or determinism has at its heart the fear of the future. It is the Kierkegaardian Angst or the Heideggerian experience of being "held within the Void." The only answer to this dread is the revealed Word of God in Jesus Christ, i.e., the revelation of another realm to this realm. To the man who cries, ". . . help thou mine unbelief," comes the answer, not through "strenuous efforts . . . attempting by concentration of will to suppress the uncertainty component,"[3] but by the awareness that true life is lived not in "contents" but in that sphere of the non-objectifiable, in the realm of the I-Thou.[4] It is only in this sphere of the supra-mundane that

---

[1] Heim, The Transformation of the Scientific World View, pp. 140-145.

[2] Attention should be called to the remarkable agreement in analysis between Heim and A. S. Eddington, Space, Time and Gravitation (Cambridge: University Press, 1921).

[3] Heim, The Transformation of the Scientific World View, p. 156.

[4] Once again we see Heim's dependence upon the "new ontology" of Martin Buber and Martin Heidegger. The "ontology" is not the important matter with Heim, however, since the cruciality of "relationship" or "meeting" far outweighs the philosophical issue. When Dietrich Bonhoeffer reviewed the first edition of Glaube und Denken, "Zu Karl Heims Glaube und Denken," Christentum und Wissenschaft, VIII, No. 12 (1932), 411, he accused Heim of an "uncritical ontology." Apparently Heim in response purposely avoided "ontological considerations" in the third edition so that the significance of the relationships of "I," "Thou," and "It" would stand in their singular importance. Cf. Heim, Glaube und Denken, 3. Aufl., p. 236.

that human Angst is overcome by the gift of faith.

a) Consequences for Apologetics

Such an analysis as the preceding should reveal the first stage of Heim's apologetic method. It remains for us to draw certain conclusions from this method of critical analysis before proceeding to Heim's actual reconstruction. The all-important thrust to Heim's analysis is that he sees these three substitute-absolutes as being man's resort to fill the vacuum left when a particular *Weltanschauung* gives way. Heim sees the history of philosophy and physics filled with the attempts to overcome the basic experience of life that "the universe is in the process of passing out of being."[1] "One seeks to overcome this impression, which must lead to despair if one is without God, by constructing a metaphysical system."[2] Heim cites the evidence which Ludwig Klages[3] has shown "that as soon as the concept of duration and of something enduring appears, the human spirit reads into nature that which satisfies its own spiritual needs."[4] This produces an immanentism, and *against such a construct Heim directs his apologetics*.

The second consequence of Heim's critical analysis is that this metaphysical immanentism is the philosophical, sophisticated expression of "pure secularism." For Heim this "true secularism is not so much an atheism as an idolatry. The simplest form of this philosophical expression of secularism occurred in Democritus.[1]

---

[1] Heim, "Christian Faith and the Growing Power of Secularism," in Leibrecht, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 190.

[3] Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1929).

[4] Heim, "Christian Faith and the Growing Power of Secularism," p. 189.

> . . . the doctrine of atoms was a declaration of war against faith in God; it was an attempt to remove man's fear of the divine. . . . In this system of thought matter has received the property which, according to the Bible, belongs to God alone. Materialism deifies the world."[2]

In the nineteenth century the theory of the preservation of energy was elevated to a cosmic law, and Heim sees here the same principle at work as in Democritus.

> As a working hypothesis, the principle of the preservation of energy has, of course, a fully scientific status. As soon as one makes this working hypothesis into an assertion concerning the universe, however, one has gone beyond empirical observation and has formulated a metaphysical statement.[3]

Modern secularism goes far beyond this stage, however. Such philosophical and scientific Weltanschauungen only tend to support a modern "popular secularism." It is this "popular secularism," having been fed over the centuries by a progression of Weltanschauungen, which is most potent today. This "popular secularism" would deny all philosophical speculation, find the language of the church completely meaningless, and express itself as a "practical materialism." Heim sees at work here the Kierkegaardian paradox wherein flesh and sensual substance in rebellion against God become spiritual in a new sense,

---

[1] Ibid., p. 190.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid. As an example, see J. Haeckel, Riddle of the Universe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939).

"namely, as the demonic denial of the spirit."[1] It is in this context that Heim saw the rise of National Socialism in his own country as the momentary expression of a "popular secularism." In the present time this same "secularistic spirit" can be found in Communism which is "the negative form of frenzy against the spirit." It is out of the same wellspring of "secularism" that modern hedonism drinks:

> Thus arises the insane cult of the moment as it is found in the pleasure-seeking of a tired city dweller, who only wants to get drunk and forget himself.[2]

Heim relentlessly drives his analysis through the scientific and philosophical *Weltanschauungen* of the moment to the very core of man's existential predicament. This predicament as Heidegger defines it, is that of being "thrown into my thereness" (*geworfen in mein Da*).[3] It is the plight of a fallen world. Thus "secularism" is "the form in which the fallen world demonically seeks to replace God, from whom it receives its being in each moment of its existence."[4] It is man's immersion of himself, his whole existence, in a "this worldly" immanentism or, in the language which Heim will employ in his reconstruction, "secularism" is man's becoming lost in the "polarity" of this world.[5] Here, then, is the second consequence of Heim's analysis: *such an analysis reveals the true nature of modern "secularism."*

---

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Heidegger, as quoted in Heim, *The Transformation of the Scientific World View*, p. 115.

[4] Heim, "Christian Faith and the Growing Power of Secularism," in Leibrecht, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

[5] See Heim's treatment of "secularism" as polar-immersion in *Christian Faith and Natural Science*, pp. 151-249.

The third consequence of Heim's critical analysis is that such an analysis reveals the bi-polar alternative of mundane existence, and this same analysis shows the impotency of the bi-polar dimensions for the real Lebensfragen. One may ask the traditional metaphysical questions: What is the nature of reality? What are the features which mark reality? How are these features or characteristics integrated into a coherent world picture? In the traditional search for an answer to these questions it is all too easy to become involved in an immanental either/or dilemma. In order to avoid a philosophical infinite regress or a solipsism, one must adopt one of two possibilities. (1) In the infinite succession of effects and causes "we may halt at some particular member of the series and take that as the First Cause."[1] Beyond this First Cause one must not inquire but must explain everything from it. "What is done is just this: one member of the series of causes and effects is made absolute and is constituted the primum movens."[2] Heim's judgment upon this is quite to the point: "Such a solution of the question Why may be described by the Biblical term, 'Idolatry,' even if it appears in the Age of Science, in the secular form of a scientific cosmogony."[3] (2) The second possibility is to admit the futility of finding a First Cause. One then could join forces with Nietzsche and hold that it is the whole series which creates itself and exists by its own virtue.

---

1. Heim, God Transcendent, p. 191.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

> "The world: a monster of force, without beginning, without end; a solid brazen mass of force which never grows more and never less; which suffers no wear and tear, but only changes its form; a universe unalterably immense, an economy without expenses or losses, yet also without increase or addition . . . a sea of forces turned in upon each other in surge and storm, forever changing, forever returning."[1]

Whereas the first possibility is "idolatry," the second possibility Heim terms "Pantheism."[2]

The same either/or immanental choice holds if one asks the ethical or existential questions: What must I do? Why must I do it? This is really to ask the question of personal authority. One may refer to the series of preceding norms and authorities and arbitrarily choose. This issues in what Heim calls "relativism."[3] The alternative is to select one point or norm or authority in the series, "drive the nail here," insist upon acceptance of this one point as absolute, and subject all other norms to this. This produces a kind of "positivism."[4] The very structure of Heim's "polar" existence is shown in this analysis. We cannot explain the "Why" of this either/or dilemma, but

> . . . we can reduce the fact which here confronts us to a universal law, applicable to the whole structure of the world of I-thou-it in which we have been placed. That is the law of polarity which is the basis of all distinctions which we have to make within this world.[5]

---

1. F. W. Nietzsche, Wille zur Macht, section 1067, trans. and quoted by E. P. Dickie in Heim, God Transcendent, p. 192.
2. Heim, God Transcendent, p. 192.
3. Cf. Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, pp. 174-186; also Heim, Jesus the Lord, trans. D. H. van Daalem (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), pp. 21-27.
4. Cf. Heim, God Transcendent, pp. 195-209.
5. Heim, Jesus the Lord, p. 11. Cf. Heim, God Transcendent, pp. 50-76.

Whether one asks the metaphysical or the existential question, as long as one remains within the polarity of mundane existence, one is locked within an immanentism, the root of modern "secularism." It is for this reason that modern "secularism" manifests itself in either idolatrous movements such as Naziism and Communism or in philosophical and mystical cults on the metaphysical level. It is for this reason that modern "secularism" manifests itself in ambivalent ethics or in fanatic frenzy on the existential level.

2. The Ultimate Either/Or

The foregoing analysis serves Heim as a preparation for confronting contemporary man with the radical, ultimate either/or decision of human existence. The previous either/or decision had been a "polar" decision. If man is to escape the dilemmas of "polar" existence, then he must come face to face with the ultimate either/or. Either one must choose "secularism" in one of its contemporary _Weltanschauungen_ or choose faith as it reveals a reality beyond "polarity" or as it reveals a "supra-polarity."[1] Heim's metaphysical and existential analysis of "polarity," which we have seen above, is not to be viewed as two levels of existence or as problems on two different planes. The fact of the matter is that "idolatry," "pantheism," "relativism," and "positivism are all expressions of an immanental world view which is "secularism." In any case, God is so swallowed up in the "world" that a distinction cannot be made between Creator and creation, Lord and subject. The conclusion to such confusion is well depicted in the stance assumed by Heidegger of trudging the road into the future which is the road into the night, "a road which we must, however, travel."[1]

---

[1] Heim, _Christian Faith and Natural Science_, pp. 159-174.

The plight of mundane existence, the plight of the "polar" either/or can be broken only by the rejection of the speculative systems locked in the polarities of this world through the assertion of faith that

> . . . the polar form of existence is not the only one possible, but that there is a second, completely different mode of being in which the whole world-form of polarity is transcended, yet not by the blotting out of the entire contents of the world but by the recasting of them in new form.[2]

Here, then, is the ultimate either/or: "secularism or God."[3] It is only after such a rigorous analysis of the cultural *Weltanschauungen* has been completed that the constructive task of Christian apologetics can begin. This analysis forms the new *Ausgangspunkt* for the apologetic task. In the remaining volumes of *Der evangelische Glaube und das Denken der Gegenwart* Heim is concerned "to undertake the difficult task of opposing the world-picture of disbelief with a world-picture of belief."[3]

In summary, the apologetic methodology of Heim rests upon his phenomenological analysis of cultural Weltanschauungen which is performed in order to show the "wholly other-ness" not only of transcendence but the whole Christian Weltanschauung. This "otherness" is not, as we shall see below, a spatial distinction but a dimensional one. The analysis can reveal only the possibility of this suprapolar dimension. Man cannot lay hold of this dimension by his own rational endeavors.

---

[1] Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, as paraphrased by Heim, *The Transformation of the Scientific World View*, pp. 158-159.

[2] *Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science*, p. 161.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 230. This is the title of the last division of Heim's analysis.

> In proportion to the special position of service which . . . knowledge occupies towards life, there falls to Christian philosophy a merely negative task. It must "unsecure" man. It must frankly show up in its impossibility everything that man has at any time undertaken, in order to move into a position in reserve where he is secure in face of the question of eternity, with which every moment confronts him afresh.[1]

C. Toward a Christian Weltanschauung

Since secularism presents man with a world view, the task of the Christian apologist and theologian is to present in the face of this world view a Christian Weltanschauung. Secularism, since it is a world view confined to the polarities of this world, presents man with a choice of relativism or positivism which manifest themselves as nihilism and fanaticism. Either form of secularism is actually a monism, according to Heim's analysis, since in either form the necessary distinction cannot be made between "God" and the "world." This being the case, the challenge which confronts the theologian is to phrase a world view which can transcend the polarities of intramundane existence and which will call in question both cultural and metaphysical immanentism. The task of a Christian world view is that of speaking meaningfully of the transcendence of God.[1]

---

[1] Heim, Glaube und Denken, 1. Aufl., p. 396.

1. The Case for Intramundane Transcendence

The theologian must replace the secular Weltanschauung with a Christian Weltanschauung which is freed from the immanentism of the secular and scientistic[2] world views. Yet, the theologian cannot begin uncritically with the concept of transcendence, but he must begin with forms of transcendence which are obvious to any person who is willing to analyze his own existence. The starting point, strangely, is to be "what is closest and most intimately known to all of us, what we find when we try to look around ourselves in the world,"[3] that is, the inward self, the ego. When one encounters his ego he discovers that however much he seeks to make himself an object, he must realize that

> I am neither in my body, nor above it nor beside it.
> I am on this side of all objectivity, and consequently outside all three-dimensional space.[4]

In this nonobjectivizable ego is found, says Heim, "the impregnable stronghold which is prior to the objective world of experience and must form the basis for our settlement of accounts with natural science."[1]

---

[1] While the actual phrase "transcendence of God" is never mentioned as such in Heim's Glaube und Denken, so strongly is he convinced of the imperative to speak of transcendence in a new way that in translating the third edition of this work Edgar Dickie felt compelled to entitle the volume, God Transcendent.

[2] A "scientistic" world view is to be distinguished from "scientific" world views in that the former lays claim to finality and is built upon a scientism which has projected itself into a metaphysics.

[3] Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, p. 35.

[4] Ibid., p. 38.

a) Nonobjective Relations

In selecting as his starting point the nonobjectivizable ego and in proceeding to delineate the possibilities of a non-three-dimensional differentiation Heim takes his stand within the existential-ontological framework of the I-Thou philosophy of such recent thinkers as Eberhard Grisebach[2] and Martin Buber.[3] In this respect Heim stands in the tradition of what Edward Farley calls "a reconstructed idealism."[4]

It is Heim's conviction that a nonobjective way of differentiation must be found so that religious belief may be placed on a foundation which lies outside the reach of the physical sciences and is therefore not subject to the dangers of polarity, immanentism, monism, i.e., secularistic world views. The philosophy of personal being as found in Grisebach and Buber, and particularly the latter, commends itself to him for here is found a description of a world of "I-Thou" relations beyond the reach of objectifying thought. Science takes the "I-It" attitude and shows to man a world of objects. Such thinking is within the realm of intramundane polarities. But there is also a world of inter-personal relations which defies objectification. This is the

---

1. Ibid., p. 55.
2. Eberhard Grisebach, Gegenwart: Ein kritische Ethik (Halle Saale: Max Niemeyer, 1928).
3. Martin Buber, I and Thou (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).
4. Edward Farley, The Transcendence of God (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 111. The development of the doctrine of the self in nineteenth-century idealism originating from problems in Kant's epistemology was clearly described in 1919 in Josiah Royce's Lectures in Modern Idealism (New Haven: Yale University Press), Ch. II.

world designated by both Buber and Grisebach as the world of "I-Thou." With these distinctions in mind Heim sets forth to show that there are three basic relations within the intramundane sphere of the world which are nonobjectifiable.

"*My World*" *and* "*Your World*."--The first type of relationship which Heim describes is the confrontation between the nonobjectiable ego of one observer and the nonobjectifiable ego of another observer.

> Something dark and strange breaks in upon the quiet ordered world of the ego and shakes its foundation. . . . The picture of the whole world which I necessarily form for myself from this particular central vantage-point is all at once disturbed and called in question by the coming on the scene of a second ego which is as irremovably and unexchangeably welded to another position as I am to mine. From this there arises a world which has two centres and yet which logically can have only one centre. For each of us, both you and I, must make the same demand and the same claim, namely, that we are the centre, the only standpoint from which everything is seen correctly. The non-objective seeing point is located in two positions, yet it *can* only be located in one position and *can* only be one seeing point.[1]

The problem which one confronts is that there are here two "worlds," for the "world" is never some objective entity separated from the personal observer, yet it is quite obvious that these "worlds" are not two entities existing side-by-side. "Both worlds are infinite. There is no wall or partition at which my world ceases to be and the world of the other person begins."[2] Therefore, there appears here a relation which cannot be objectively expressed.

---

1. Heim, *Christian Faith and Natural Science*, pp. 52-53.
2. Heim, *God Transcendent*, p. 86.

"_I_" and "_It_."--The above nonobjective relation leads then to the distinction between the nonobjective space of the ego and the objective space of objects, i.e., the distinction between "I" and "it." Can this relationship be explained in objective terms? Heim responds in the negative, for an affirmative answer would imply that the ego is itself objectifiable. The ego receives the world of objects, i.e., "it," but the ego remains nevertheless irreducible to objectivity. This does not mean that the ego is shut off from the world of objects and is bound in what philosophy has called the ego-centric predicament. Heim's argument is that on the basis of the ontological distinctions between "Thou" and "it," the ego does not have the same ontological status as the world which confronts it. In other words, the gap between subject and object is not epistemological but ontological. In this confrontation what is revealed to the ego is, namely, that there are _dimensions_ which cannot be objectified.

> The great significance which this nonobjectivizable region possesses, not only for our knowledge but for our entire life, becomes clear to us only if we now extend the scope of our considerations to include the most important aspect of reality, namely the fact that the world of experience in which we are located is not at rest in a static condition but advancing in time and involved in continuous change.[1]

Speaking objectively this "advancing" is the world as measurable time. This is, however, to speak of time apart from the nonobjectifiable ego.

---

1. Heim, _Christian Faith and Natural Science_, p. 57.

> That is the picture which time presents if I consider it apart from myself. A completely different picture of reality arises, however, if I no longer leave myself out of account but relate my own existence to this conception of time. . . . From the nonobjective space in which I stand there runs, so to speak, a line which extends to this one definite position in the world of objects. In this way this position acquires a special significance deriving from a different dimension. Since the world of experience is not in a state of rest but continually moving forwards in the flow of time, one point on the time line, although objectively in alignment with all the other points on the line, in this way suddenly acquires a special significance which distinguishes it from the rest of the series. It acquires the character of being now.[1]

This confrontation between the world and the ego in the "now," in the *Gegenwart*, possesses the character of nonobjectification. The "now" can never be objectified; only that which is "past" is "it." Thus, here is the second nonobjectifiable relation.

"*I*" and "*I*."--By this stage it is quite obvious that if the two previous instances of nonobjectifiability are granted, there is one final intramundane relation which is equally nonobjectifiable. This is the relation between one ego and another ego. It is here that Buber's categories are more actively involved in Heim's thought than at any other point. It was Buber's insistence that real life was meeting in the reality of spontaneity, mutuality, directness, in the *Gegenwart* -- in the "present." Buber called the "what" of this relationship *Ichwesen* (Ego-being). Man's true *being* however can never be constituted within the schema of the old Cartesian dichotomy of subject-object. In fact this former way of knowing and existing can in actuality distort man's being into the shape of a thing, objectify it into an It instead of a "Thou."[1] This discovery of Buber's was what Heim had earlier called "a Copernical revolution as rich in consequences as the idealist discovery of the "I" . . . . pointing us beyond the Cartesian contribution to modern philosophy."[2]

---

[1] *Ibid*., p. 58.

This struggle between the I and the Thou for a new confrontation of the world is what Heim called "will."

> The will is . . . a form of existence of the ego . . . thus belongs to the non-objectivizable space to which the ego belongs, the space in which the encounter takes place between the I and Thou.[3]

But, if this is so, Heim argues, we are impelled to conclude

> that what we call the will, in contradistinction to impulse and instinct . . . is not an energy within the narrow field of our human organism, existing side by side with the other, far more powerful energies in the world, such as gravity, electricity, magnetism and the chemical and biological forces. If it were that, then the will of us puny human beings would be of no consequence at all for the course of world events. But the invisible force which we designate with the word "will" is not comprised within the narrow confines of our tiny human existence. For since the volitional ego is non-objectivizable it transcends the whole objective world space and all its spatial dimension.[4]

---

1. See James C. Logan, "Martin Buber: A Voice Outside the Camp," Christian Advocate, September 9, 1965, pp. 9-11, for a fuller treatment of Buber at this point.
2. Heim, "Ontologie und Theologie," Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, neue Folge XI (1930), 333. A similar statement is also made in Heim, Glaube und Denken, 1. Aufl., p. 405f.
3. Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, p. 67.
4. Ibid., p. 70.

What is frequently missed in the interpretation of Heim is his conviction that this pervasive will which is nonobjectifiable is the actual means whereby Heim is able to erect his new world view as a counter to the secularistic world view.

Heim, therefore, concludes that within the scope of man's existential experience there can be uncovered these three basic nonobjectifiable relations. These are all nonobjective spaces which simultaneously coincide with the objective spaces of bodies. When this insight is coupled with the understanding of relation between "I's" as being that of a pervasive will, there is rendered possible the replacement of the secularistic world view with a world view pregnant with religious meaning. The question remains: If these relations transcend one another in some way other than three-dimensional measurement, how is one to speak of this transcendence?

b) Contents and Dimensions[1]

The question which Heim now faces is: What is at the service of the theologian to aid in conceptualizing this nonobjective transcendence within the intramundane sphere? Heim finds exciting possibilities in in the disciplines of the modern physical sciences. Modern physics offers the theologian some tools which are useful in this endeavor. It is at this point that Heim makes his own peculiar contribution to

---

1. Heim, God Transcendent, Ch. II.

to the "I-Thou" philosophy of personal being by incorporating the concepts of _spaces_ and _dimensions_ as found in modern physics. Modern physics operates on the assumption of a plurality of spaces. This plurality of spaces has led modern physicists to conclude that there is no absolute standard of calculation. While Euclidean space and Einsteinian space may differ radically, their sphere of operation is different, but they do not necessarily contradict each other. What must be seen here is that this does not lead to a positing of another space on the continuum of three-dimensional space. Heim explains:

> what we have here is two spaces, each of which embraces the whole universe but each in quite a different aspect . . . while we are encompassed on all sides by the temporal world, we stand at the same time even now in the midst of eternity and are enclosed within the archetypal space (_Urraum_) of God.[1]

This leads Heim to distinguish two basic ways of viewing the world and its relation to the ego. There is the three-dimensional perspective in which boundaries of space are measured in terms of _contents_. In other words, this is the objective perspective on things. _Contents_ are exclusive of one another and are assigned to specific, objective spaces, e.g., an object is placed within a boundary of three-dimensional space because it has _content_. There is, therefore, a type of differentiation of transcendence by means of the established boundaries of _contents_, i.e., one object can transcend or be differentiated from another object while the two may be held in the same three-dimensional

---

1. Heim, _Christian Faith and Natural Science_, pp. 169-170. (the translation of _Urraum_ is difficult, but perhaps "primal space" would be more accurate than "archetypal space."

space.

When the observing ego enters the picture, however, another factor is presented which cannot be adequately reckoned with on the basis of objective differentiation in terms of content. These nonobjective relations which Heim delineated as of three types cannot be marked out or bounded as objects within a common space. Therefore, a new designation must be given to these nonobjective relations and Heim terms this dimensions. Dimensions are spaces also, but they are spaces which have structures of a different order from geometrical spaces. This means that the worlds of "I-It" (three-dimensional space) and "I-Thou" (nonobjectifiable space) are actually two distinct spaces. The observing ego is in both spaces at the same time. The former relationship is referred to as objectiviziable space, and the latter is referred to as non-objectiviziable space. The latter is therefore a dimension in distinction from a content.

What is not always recognized in critical treatments of Heim's position is that this manner of differentiation is predicated upon a kind of panpsychic view of reality.

> We must reckon with the possibility that the "medial" significance of the objective world does not apply only to relation between one human being and another and to the relation between man and non-human nature, . . . We cannot help thinking that the whole of reality around us is not simply an inanimate mass, but that there lies behind it something which presents an analogy, however distant, with what we call a Thou.[1]

---

[1] Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, pp. 169-171.

Heim is not hesitant to extend the possibilities of this nonobjective "I-Thou" relation to include animal life[1] and inanimate nature.[2] Once again, his understanding of the pervasiveness of will makes this extension possible.

> As soon as we have extended the principle of animation to the world of plants, the modern conception of the analysis of matter into periodically motivated systems of electrons brings us quite automatically to the question whether it is really conceivable that the two-sidedness of reality, the correspondence of an invisible "inner picture" with the visible "outer picture" suddenly ceases when we reach the limits of the organic world.[3]

It is the panpsychic view of reality[4] which allows Heim to

---

1. Ibid., pp. 87-88.
2. Ibid., p. 98.
3. Ibid., p. 95; cf. p. 104.
4. The two American dissertations dealing with Heim's thought, Edward Farley, The Transcendence of God and John Pemberton, III, "Karl Heim's Concept of the Apologetic Task of Christian Theology" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Religion, Duke University, 1948), both give attention to this facet of Heim's new world view. Farley's delineation and contrasting with German idealism is most incisive. This aspect of Heim's thought is not treated in the otherwise excellent critique of Heim offered by Paul Holmer, Theology and the Scientific Study of Religion (Minneapolis: T. S. Denison and Company, Inc., 1961). Adolf Köberle in "Theologie der Kontakte, Gedenrede für Professor D. Dr. Karl Heim, D. D.," Theologische Literaturzeitung, No. 2 (February 1959), 149-151, fails to deal with this aspect of his thought. This omission is undoubtedly due to the difficulty which commentators have experienced in unraveling the intricacies of Heim's apologetic approach, and the attention has, therefore, been focused on Heim's method and epistemology with the result that his metaphysical basis has been slighted. A significant treatment of Heim in terms of his metaphysics has been given by Robert C. Whittemore, "Karl Heim: Panentheism and the space of God," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXX, No. 11 (November 1959), 824-237. A full treatment of Heim's relation to Bergsonian vitalism has yet to be done, but on the basis of Whittemore's persuasive exposition of Heim's metaphysics, this would seem to be a promising endeavor.

conclude that there exists simultaneously with the three-dimensional space a nonobjective dimension or what he calls a "second space"

> which, together with the whole of reality, we traverse at every instant and which surrounds us from all sides just as the space of objectivity does.[1]

Dimensions are, therefore, to be differentiated in relation to "spaces" but not contents. In contrast to a content a dimension is nonobjectifiable. This leads Heim to insist that when a perspective shows both unity and difference at the same time dimensions are here involved but not contents. This perspective results in a qualitative but not a quantative change. Epistemologically speaking, a dimensional differentiation is known differently than a content differentiation. The difference here is that between nonobjectifiable knowledge, i.e., recognition of dimensional differentiation and objectifiable knowledge, i.e., content differentiation.[2]

Having distinguished between contents and dimensions in this fashion, Heim now considers it possible to give an adequate account of that which he terms the "polar world."

c) The World of Polarity

The composite of objective and nonobjective spaces constitutes what Heim calls the "polar world." The composite constitutes the "polar world" because the spaces occur simultaneously. This composite of two kinds of spaces Heim refers to as "polar space." This implies that every space, both objective and nonobjective, included within polar space is governed by certain laws. As an illustration of such a law, Heim cites one of the cardinal principles of Buber's philosophy, e.g., there can never be an "I" without a "Thou."

---

[1] Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, p. 82.
[2] See Heim, God Transcendent, pp. 60ff.

Having depicted this kind of polar world, Heim pushes forth to another question: Can man be satisfied with the exclusive findings of this analysis? Is the "polar world" sufficient for the grounding of life's significance? This is in essence for Heim the religious question. Does the "polar world" give man a satisfactory answer to the question of origin and destiny? Heim is not content with easy analogical solutions to his quest for a Weltanschauung, and therefore he is not content to halt his pursuit at the point of the "polar world." Polar space is not the answer which must be secured if one is to speak of meaning, and this question cannot be pushed aside. Man's existence demands an answer.

Heim demonstrates this plight of existence in God Transcendent within the specifically ethical context. The question of what man is to do is present in every moment. As an alternative man can choose one position in the polar world and from this position attempt to answer his ethical question or the metaphysical question which always stands behind the ethical question. This is precisely what happens in many secularistic world views, and the result of such a decision is what Heim calls a "positivism." Ethically this issues in fanaticism, which was at least part of the social and political context in which Heim was writing at the time of National Socialism in Germany. On the other hand, man may attempt to embrace the whole spectrum of causes and actions as his answer, and this amounts to what Heims calls secularistic "relativism." The latter eventually issues in nihilism.[1]

When in 1949 Heim published his Christian Faith and Natural Science, he chose to deal with the same questions, but in this instance he employed insights gained from Martin Heidegger's analysis of existence. Here he wrote, as Heidegger had done, of man's being (Dasein) as manifesting an inexplicable "thrownness" (Geworfenheit). Now the question is phrased more existentially as: Why is my existence here and now? Existence demanded an answer, and the polar world was inadequate to supply that answer. As long as existence depended upon the polar world to resolve its questions, existence would oscillate between fatal relativism and blind positivism. Whether the analysis of the polar world was carried forward in the more formal manner in God Transcendent or in the more existential manner in the later work, the end result was the same.

If this impasse between positivism and relativism is true, what has this analysis of the polar world accomplished for Heim? It would seem to offer little, and yet for Heim it offers clues of great significance. This analysis has revealed that there is a kind of transcendence which is not objective and is not confined to the mold of three-dimensional space. This would mean that an eventual view of transcendence would not have to depend on the "spatialism" of many scientific world view. Transcendence has been freed from its dependence upon the world. This analysis has also shown that any attempt other than to find transcendence beyond the polarities of the world is destined to issue in a polar immanentism which is the equivalent of a secularistic world view. The only alternative is to push beyond the polar world. Intramundane existence cannot solve the questions of man's origin and meaning.

---

[1] Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, pp. 174-186.

2. The Case for Supramundane Transcendence

The next step which Heim takes is to maintain that physical space (objective) and interpersonal space (nonobjective) are alike embraced in an archetypal space (Urraum). The polarities of intramundane existence are included within the archetypal space which Heim calls suprapolar space.[1] In this way the polarities which characterize both physical and interpersonal space are overcome. This suprapolar space is "able to span the difference of the spaces in which we are enclosed."[2] The presence of God is found in the suprapolar space,[3] and in this possibility Heim roots his concept of transcendence.

> It is only when this mysterious law which governs relations between spaces is applied to the connection between polar and the suprapolar space that we can understand the paradoxical fact to which the Bible repeatedly refers, that God, whom no man can see, and who, as the Creator, is distinguished from all created things by an infinite qualitative dissimilarity, is nevertheless at the same time, everywhere and at every point in the world, inescapably near.[4]

---

[1] Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, pp. 159-174.

[2] Heim, The Transformation of the Scientific World View, p. 107.

[3] Heim does not identify God with suprapolar space. It is the omnipresence of God which is met in suprapolar space, not God Himself. See Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, p. 163. Cf. also Heim, God Transcendent, p. 211f.

[4] Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, p. 169.

In his first volume of Der evangelische Glaube[1] Heim explicates this concept of suprapolar space without actually referring to this particular concept by name. In this earlier treatment Heim refers to transcendence by use of the biblical terms of God as Creator and Lord.

a) Creator and Lord

In his treatment of these biblical terms for God's transcendence Heim refers to the same questions previously mentioned which arise from man's polar existence. The questions are: What is the origin of the universe? and On what basis must man make his ethical decisions to act? Within the confines of polar existence a satisfactory answer to these questions cannot be found.

Traditionally, theology has answered the first question by the argument of a Primum Movens. This is the cosmological answer which Aristotle had first suggested and which was developed into a Christian theological answer in the cosmological argument for the existence of God in Thomas Aquinas. Heim finds the classical answer unsatisfactory since the positing of a Primum Movens is purely arbitrary. Granted the understanding of polar existence there is no reason that this should not lead to an infinite regress. God cannot be a First Cause, but the biblical view of the Creator is that of a being who calls that which is not into being and sustains it from moment to moment. God as Creator cannot be viewed in this traditional cosmological manner, for real transcendence must be beyond the polarities of relativism and absolutism, both of which are only extensions of the polar world. The only way in which to avoid this dilemma is to find the omnipresence of God in a space which embraces but at the same time transcends the polar spaces.

---

[1] Heim, God Transcendent, chapter VII.

In answer to the ethical question of decision and action, one cannot absolutize any aspect of the polarity of the world, for this would be idolatry. God cannot even be absolutized as the whole of the polarity-spaces of the polar world. Once again, a space which embraces but at the same time transcends the polar space is required, and this is the meaning of the biblical term Lord.

b) Nonobjective Transcendence

The actual constructive aspect of Heim's new world view is to be found in his attempt to make this suprapolar space conceivable. The older apologetics had usually argued from the world to God. This was the whole force of the Scholastic argument based on the *analogia entis*. The force of Heim's critique of this form of argumentation is already obvious; such a procedure at best can result only in becoming caught in the polar structure of the polar world. The conclusion of such an argument is obviously not God nor his omnipresence.

If the analogy to suprapolar space can be maintained, such a space must not be viewed as another space located atop the three-dimensional space, for this, too, would be an objectifiable space. Rather than this, it must be seen that suprapolar space is in reality a nonobjectifiable *dimension* which is at once present to the polar world and yet not limited to these polarities. The space of God is actually transcendent of the nonobjectifiable polar transcendence which he had earlier marked out.[1] There is actually an ontological distinction between the space of the polar world and suprapolar space. At this point Heim is not concerned to offer a philosophical justification for faith. Indeed, the philosophical justification would be impossible so great is the difference of this new dimension:

> In opposition to this polar space of temporality, including as part-spaces both the objective perceptual space and the nonobjective space of the Thou relations, there stands the archetypal space of eternity or of the omnipresence of God.[2]

That which Heim seeks to achieve is the conceivability[3] of such a suprapolar space. He is not interested in proving the existence of such. That which he hopes to achieve is to show that space, and in this case suprapolar space, is the means by which God reveals his transcendent nature to man, and yet even at this point God is not this space.

---

[1] In the treatment of the "space of God" an interesting comparison can be made between Heim and Karl Barth. Cf. Barth, Church Dogmatics, II, 1 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1957), pp. 470-475. Heim's concern is to begin with the possibilities of modern man's mentality to conceive this suprapolar space. Barth, on the other hand, is concerned to show that this space is peculiarly God's space and that He creates his own space. Both theologians are consistent with their original intention. Heim is concerned to make conceivable the transcendent dimension. Barth is concerned that the transcendent space which is simultaneously an all-pervasive space be seen as sui generis with God's self-revelation. Here, as in so many other places, one can see the essential differences between Heim and Barth. The former is an apologist; the latter is a dogmatist. Methodologically, they are at different tasks. Substantially they reveal a surprising congruence.

[2] Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, pp. 168-169.

[3] Ibid., p. 205: "All this means no more than that belief in the personal nature of the Power which rules the world is at any rate conceivable."

Suprapolar space is the point or dimension of God's revelation.

Yet there is more to conceivability than mere assertion of the radical distinctions between polar and suprapolar space. The distinction itself must receive a treatment which at least makes it conceivable. How does Heim proceed in this task? There are at least two facets to Heim's argument at this point.

First, man's very being as a "Thou" cries out for that which will reconcile and transcend the fateful "either/or" of positivism or relativism. The very being of man demands that this dichotomy be overcome. Behind this understanding of man stands the Buberian conviction that an "I" can never be without a "Thou." The very fact of man's being points to that which gives it being.

> I can kill my body but I cannot "make the quietus" of my self; I have no power over my self. . . . For always, whenever within this world of the encounters I find my Thou, the soul which redeems me from my I-solitude and which is responsive to my words, the very reason why this encounter affords me such relief and happiness is that this Thou falls into my lap as a gift from above and without any intervention on my part. When I have this experience it becomes overwhelmingly clear to me that I cannot myself create the Thou which confronts me.[1]

Secondly, Heim for understandable reasons is wary of analogical argument, for such argument tends to remain bound to the polarities of this world. Nevertheless, he cautiously moves in this direction.[2] The transcendence of which he speaks is metaphorical in nature. In a

---

1. Ibid., p. 208.
2. Edward Farley, op. cit., p. 123, is correct in seeing that Heim is less cautious in his later works with the use of analogy than he is in God Transcendent.

parallel argument to man's existential demand that the "either/or" dichotomy be overcome, Heim insists that the very manner in which objective and nonobjective spaces transcend each other is suggestive that there is an archetypal space (Urraum) or primal space which is really the ground and explanation of the intramundane transcendence. In other words, there is an implication in the manner in which intramundane spaces transcend each other that there is an embracive supramundane space which makes this possible. On this basis Heim can argue along the paths of analogy or metaphor from one type of transcendence. At the same time, while this new and utterly different space is employed to make conceivable the transcendence of God, God is not identifiable with this space. It is the mode of his transcendence and revelation to man. Edward Farley is correct to see that this is the form in which God reveals himself, but God himself transcends this form. Says Farley, ". . . this is the point where the analogy is broken."[1]

These distinctions between the form of his revelation and the reality of God must be kept in mind in order to understand Heim's attempt to make transcendence conceivable. Still, one must suspect that ultimately the argument of suprapolar space in Heim is actually predicated upon a prior experience of "I-Thou" encounter. It is much more an explication of the encounter than is it a formal argument for the conceivability of transcendence. Even at this point, however, the argument has its validity in explicating the Christian's theological conviction of God. Like the classical arguments for the existence of God, Heim's argument for suprapolar space is at best an explication of God's transcendence which he has already accepted on better grounds. How else are we to understand his own words:

---

[1] Farley, ibid., p. 126.

> Here we have an entirely new and unique I-Thou relation, one which is fundamentally different from the attitude of the onlooker and scientific observer, from the mystical immersion of myself in myself, and from the Thou encounter with a fellow human being which in the polytheistic religions is extended to include intercourse with the gods. This new and unique relation is prayer. Prayer stills the incessant movement of my quest for a Thou to whom I can devote myself wholly.[1]

On this ground Heim then posits the Christian belief in the transcendent Thou as a personal Thou.

> God is not an It, since no I could be generated by an It. . . . I can find God only if He meets me as a Thou. . . . God is the omnipresent Thou of every I, the Being who is immediately close to us, before whom we all stand always, before whom we do all our deeds, and before whom we think our most secret thoughts.[2]

The transcendent Thou is a Cosmic Ego (Weltall-Ich) who encounters man personally in a suprapolar space. The space itself does not contain the Thou but is the means of the meeting between the Thou and the I. From such a transcendent Thou the I is constituted. In this constitution of the I man discovers the true meaning of God's personal and yet transcendent being.

---

1. Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, pp. 212-213.
2. Ibid., pp. 211-212.

c) The Reality of Faith

The suprapolar space of Heim cannot be proved, and on this point Heim is explicit. The establishment of the possibility of suprapolar space only makes conceivable the self-revelation of God.

> We can be released from the bondage of polar thinking, which determines our whole interpretation of the world and all our logical processes, only if, in a totally inexplicable manner, resembling what happens when one who has been born blind receives the gift of sight, there is disclosed to us the new suprapolar space, so that at a single stroke the whole of reality shines out in a new light.[1]

Heim hammers the point relentlessly that the world view which he has established makes possible an understanding of the revelation of the transcendent God, it does not prove that transcendence. "Access to this suprapolar space of God's omnipresence is something which has to be directly granted to us by God."[2] In Heim's vocabulary the suprapolar dimension is revealed in the reality of faith which opens up the depths of existence and offers a transformation which is not within our control."[3]

What specifically does Heim mean by the reality of "faith"? There are certain things which it clearly does not mean.

> Clearly it does not mean any human action such as trust, or the acceptance of invisible realities as true. The term faith has a much more comprehensive significance. This begins to dawn upon us only when we begin to think in terms of "spaces." Faith is the mode by which we exist in a space, by which we live from its resources and are utterly rooted and grounded in it. . . . Faith is then the being of the whole man in the suprapolar space.[4]

---

1. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
2. Heim, *The Transformation of the Scientific World View*, p. 151.
3. Heim, *Christian Faith and Natural Science*, p. 241.
4. Heim, *The Transformation of the Scientific World View*, p. 148.

While theoretically the possibility of conceiving the transcendence of God is made tenable through Heim's new world view, the actual transcendence of God delivering man from the dilemmas of polar space communicates itself to man existentially. Man from the depths of his existence raises the questions of origin and basis for action, but these questions are only tragically intensified within the mundane polar structure. Relativism and positivism are not ultimately overcome by a triumphant victory in the theoretical sphere. These questions are really answered and the dilemmas genuinely overcome for man in terms of existential encounter.

> When we turn to God it is not a case of a new relation being disclosed, as when we turn in any other direction. No, the Reality of God invades the structure of all relations, disclosing, as it does a direction which is "beyond" both the two alternatives of the immanent sphere. As soon, therefore, as we conceive the bare possibility of this new direction, along which we may look for the self-disclosure of God, there must come a complete change of attitude, such as to involve not only a widening of our horizon, but a drastic new orientation of our whole existence.[1]

In other words the disclosure to man of a suprapolar space which is God's communication is in actuality the gift of God's salvific knowledge or Word to man.

Heim has been radically stung by the force of modern secularism which he sees in various world views, and always characterized by the fateful "either/or" of relativism or positivism, normlessness or fanaticism. It is for this reason that he could open God Transcendent with these words: "Between man who is bound to a God in heaven, and another who knows nothing of this bond, there is a contrast deeper than all other contrasts which separate man from man."[1] Regardless of its complicated nature, Heim's whole apologetic method is subservient to this final point where the concept of a new and radically different space creates a new possibility for faith. The advantage of Heim's apologetic method is that when this "new relation" is disclosed, the disclosure is on its own grounds. But at the same time the disclosure of the transcendent God does not refute the apologetic method, but rather, it gives existential life to the theoretical structure. It is Heim's conviction that the man of faith will actually see the world as the apologetic structure has delineated it. The method, however, is empty if it does not culminate in the practical, existential and evangelical event of faith. Thus, W. Ruttenbeck's conclusion to his very early treatment of Heim's method is sustained: "So one can truly say Heim is an apologist, because, he is above all an evangelist."[2]

---

[1] Heim, God Transcendent, p. 218.

This world view is not only a propaedeutic for faith, but from the standpoint of faith it is a Christian Weltanschauung which Heim believes is capable of displacing the secularistic world views prevalent in modern culture.

3. A Critical Response

Carl Michalson has pointed out that Heim's apologetic method has

---

1. Ibid., p. 26.
2. W. Ruttenbeck, Die apologetisch-theologische Methode Karl Heims (Leipzig: A. Diechert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1925), p. 82.

in recent times failed to sustain the attention of theologians. The lack of attention to Heim has been due, says Michalson, to the involved and intricate method which has been outlined above.[1] With the exception of Francis Burger's dissertation in Holland,[2] Edward Farley's single chapter treatment of Heim's concept of transcendence and John Pemberton's unpublished dissertation,[3] it is safe to say that since 1935 no other major treatises dealing critically with Heim's method and *Weltanschauung* have appeared on either the German, British or American market.[4]

For this study it is, therefore, necesssary to turn critical

---

1. Carl Michalson, "The Task of Apologetics in the Future," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 6(1953), 362-363.
2. Francis Burger, *Karl Heim as Apologeet* (Franeker, Netherlands: T. Wever, 1954).
3. John Pemberton, III, *op. cit.*
4. Adolf Köberle has been Heim's most ardent interpreter on the German scene, but he has not offered as yet a significant, systematic treatment of Heim's method. See Köberle, "Vernunft und Offenbarung," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 15 Jhrg. (1938); "Theologie der Kontakte: Gedenkrede für Professor D. Dr. Karl Heim, D.D.," *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, No. 2, (February 1959), 149-151. On the British scene Channing-Pearce's study of Kierkegaard and modern Christianity included some treatment of major existentialist motifs in Heim's theology, but no attention was paid to method. See M. Channing-Pearce, *The Terrible Crystal: Studies in Kierkegaard and Modern Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941). Professor E. P. Dickie of St. Andrews, Scotland, has no doubt been the most devoted interpreter of Heim in the English-speaking world. See translator's introduction to Heim's *God Transcendent*. E. L. Allen's, *Jesus Our Leader: A Guide to the Thought of Karl Heim* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1948), is no more than an elementary introduction to his thought. Under the direction of Professor Walter Künneth of Erlangen several dissertations are in preparation on various aspects of Heim's theology and will no doubt appear soon on the German scene. See dissertation listings in *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, July 1965.

attention to Heim's construction of a Christian _Weltanschauung_ and an examination of its relationship to Heim's attempt to phrase an answer to secularism. This involves a discussion of Heim's metaphysical views and the relationship which these views have to his epistemological premises.

Heim's whole endeavor is to show that the older expressions of the physical sciences (Newtonian) produced a world view, and that now with the advent of new discoveries in physics, mainly the discovery that Euclidean geometry and existence cannot be related mathematically in that this precise relationship cannot be observed objectively as such, the possibility of a new world view has come on the horizon. On the basis of "the transformation of the scientific world view" Heim finds new possibilities for a Christian _Weltanschauung_ which can answer both the theoretical and popular _Weltanschauungen_ of secularistic perspectives.

Close attention should, therefore, be given to the relationship between the new discoveries in the physical sciences and Heim's projected _Weltanschauung_. In truth what Heim is attempting is the age-old project seen in the theological endeavors of the Middle Ages, i.e., to relate the natural and the supernatural.[1] If this relationship is not to be established along the traditional lines of Platonic or Aristotelian metaphysics, what is the alternative? The most frequently employed tactic is that of analogy from one realm to the other. Heim, however, in the first volume of his major work exhibited caution concerning the use of analogy:

---

[1] See Chapter II, C, 3 and 5 of this dissertation for examination of the attempts of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas in this connection.

> The movement we execute when we reach out beyond ourselves to find God must be differentiated from our dimensional and paradoxical distinctions, and from all intramundane relations of transcendence, no less than from distinctions between contents in the same space.[1]

By the time Heim came to write his two volumes on the physical sciences, this caution was considerably less in evidence. As Ian G. Barbour points out:

> The reader may feel he is being shown a hierarchy of spaces by which man can climb with ease from physics to God. The 4-space of physics achieves on some pages a quite exalted status. . .[2]

An over-all survey of Heim's works would lead one to conclude that while he does not intend to put forth his argument on the basis of an uncritical use of analogy, a strong impression contrary to his real intentions is nevertheless communicated. His real intention has been to show that the "new physics" raises many existential questions which cannot be answered on the basis of theories in the physical sciences. In this respect Heim insists that "natural science has no bearing on the choice" between basic world views.[3] This choice is an existential one.

---

[1] Heim, God Transcendent, p. 205.

[2] Ian G. Barbour, "Karl Heim on Christian Faith and Natural Science," The Christian Scholar, XXXIX, No. 3 (September 1956) 233.

[3] Heim, The Transformation of the Scientific World View, p. 117.

The problem in interpreting Heim at this point is that Heim, himself, has clouded the issue. At many points Heim seems to give the impression that there is a direct correspondence between empirical facts and metaphysical world views. He writes:

> The potentiality which is able to actualize itself in the vast range of mathematically related systems, and the nontemporal regulative source which permits of development into the different time scales, are to us further manifestations of the omnipotence, omnipresence, and eternity of the world-ground from which our own personal existence proceeds.[1]

The very fact that Heim experiments with the possibilities of a panpsychic metaphysics creates in the mind of his readers the impression that his new Weltanschauung is actually based upon empirical facts. Contrary to the suggestions which Robert Whittemore makes in attempting to carry forth Heim's panpsychic views to an actual panentheist position, Heim would appear on stronger ground had he emphasized the ground of metaphysical speculation as being non-intellective and non-empirical. This is not to express a negative assessment of metaphysics but simply to indicate that with contemporary demands for verification of metaphysical statements, metaphysics must be careful not to make the correspondence between verifiable scientific facts a simple concurrence with metaphysical propositions.[2]

That Heim's intention is actually to base his Weltanschauung upon nonobjectifiable existential knowledge can be seen in the fact that he makes extensive use of insights from contemporary existentialism which stress the necessity of inwardness and nonobjective personal categories. This would seem really to be the basis of his metaphysics or ontology, and this is in reality the basis of his resultant world view. As has been seen above, Heim elucidates this basis through an intricate analysis and systematization of the inter-personal categories of "I-It" and "I-Thou" relations found in Buber's philosophy. If this is the actual ground of his metaphysics or ontology, and this seems to be beyond question, his world view then rests upon a type of inward and primal cognition and not upon scientifically verifiable facts. This is surely a more useful and defensible basis for metaphysics and ontology. This basis, however, rests upon the assumption that there is a correspondence between knowledge which is inward and nonobjective and metaphysics or ontology. If this premise be granted to Heim, there is a question which cannot be avoided: Why is it necessary to speculate in panpsychic categories and insist that this produces the formal framework, if not the content, of theological statements?

---

[1] Ibid., p. 112.

[2] See Paul Holmer, op. cit., pp. 62-78, for a very perceptive analysis and critique of Heim at this precise point.

The confusion in Heim's metaphysical basis is furthered in his failure to distinguish between the metaphysical and the epistemological intentions of his statements. When Heim speaks of "spaces" or "spheres" of operation, or when he calls these "divine structures of activity," is he saying that God is known through this nonobjective "space" or is he saying that this nonobjective "space" is a part of the reality of God? In short, are these epistemological or metaphysical statements? Perhaps, Heim means both if we grant the basic premise that there is a correspondence between knowledge of an inward and nonobjective nature and metaphysics or ontology. If Heim does mean that epistemology issues in metaphysics, and this would seem to be the logic of his argument, then he owes to his readers a clearer statement of the philosophical nature of this relationship between epistemology and metaphysics. This he has failed to do.

Rather than addressing himself to this fundamental problem of the relationship between epistemology and metaphysics, Heim hastens to erect a world view to displace the prevalent secularistic world views. It is Heim's conviction that in order to deal effectively with the challenge of modern secularism (and no one denies that it is a challenge), it is necessary to construct another world view to counter the secularistic world view. The question arises: Is this an effective means of dealing with the problem? Would not Heim's considerable creative abilities have been better employed in wrestling with the more fundamental issue rather than too hurriedly moving to the formulation of a new world view. There is always the danger that in replacing one world view with another that one will find himself indulging in a questionable kind of realm or sphere thinking in spite of the fact that the spheres may overlap one another? Realm-thinking (space-thinking) is realm-thinking whether it be objective or nonobjective! Any attempt to phrase a world view to counter and displace a present world view carries with it the danger of all realm-thinking. That danger is that the very category of the world (Heim's polar world) may be depreciated. After all, the creation of the world is not simply the creation of a physical universe,[1] but it is the creation of a saeculum in which life, thought and work must proceed. The polar world is God's good creation even though man within that world may have accentuated one or the other of the polarities and thereby will find himself situated in a cultural relativism or a false absolutism, i.e., in both cases secularism. Heim's analysis of secularism and his swift attempt to answer it with a new world view tend to separate in radical disjuncture the "world" and God. This may be qualitatively necessary in order to distinguish in biblical manner the Creator from his creatures. At the same time Heim's analysis obscures the necessary theological assertion that "God so loved the world. . ." This polar world is still the object of God's salvific love both in creation and redemption. If it is the object of God's creative and redemptive love, can the opposition between the world (polar space) and God (supra-polar space) be posed as acutely as does Heim. In short, does the world not possess a degree of autonomy which in itself is a part of its created goodness, and must not theology learn to appreciate this relative autonomy? It has been pointed out that the major problem of medieval theology was that it produced an ecclesiastical form of the Monophysitic heresy as it attempted to deal with the reality of the saeculum.[2] The question must here be asked of Heim: Is there not a reluctance to allow the world its independence before God, and in this sense is there not implicit in Heim's attempt to answer the challenge of secularism a

---

1. This seems to be the extent of Heim's treatment of the doctrine of creation in The World: Its Creation and Consummation, trans. Robert Smith (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962).
2. See Chapter II, C, 5 of this dissertation.

refusal to allow the world to be the world.

This displacement of one world view with another carries with it the unsavory implication of divorcement of the secular from the religious. This danger is well emphasized by Heim himself when in one of the last writings he enthusiastically commended to Christians that they "should support those who relativize world and man."[1] Heim succeeds in creating an ideological warfare between secularism and a new metaphysical world view. Heim has actually debarred himself from seeing that there is an area of meaning common to both faith and the world, and that area of common meaning is to be found in the *saeculum*. Without this common area of meaning, Heim would really have to give up any attempt to translate any modern world view into the contents of faith. If this assumption of disparity between the religious and the secular holds, where then is the common area of meaning which makes such a translation into another world view possible?

Whittemore[2] credits this disparity between the secular and the religious in Heim to an embracing of Barthian *fideism*. This is surely a mistaken judgment. Yet, perhaps Heim gives in his autobiography some support of this thesis when he agrees with the assessment of certain American students that he and Barth are "next-door neighbors."[3]

---

[1] Heim, "Christian Faith and the Growing Power of Secularism," in Leibrecht, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

[2] Whittemore, *op. cit.*, pp. 834-837.

[3] Heim, *Ich gedenke der vorigen Zeiten*, p. 319. Heim's response to this was in the affirmative: "Barth und Heim wohnen zwar nicht in gleichen Haus, aber die Häuser, in denen sie wohnen, sind einander innerlich benachbart."

A more careful analysis of Heim's autobiography and his sermons[1] would indicate that it is not so much Barthian *fideism* as Swabian piety which supports this bifurcation of the two realms. Heim conceded that pietism had dominated his thinking throughout his career. Heim's pietism had actually become a point of debate and almost prevented his appointment to the University of Tübingen in 1920.[2] The reliance upon pietistic inner anxiety and resultant faith is undoubtedly the reason Barth could reject Heim's thought as being a form of "psychologism."[3] Pietism's historic retreat from the secular is reflected in Heim's attempt to build a *Weltanschauung* which would absolutely counteract the so-called secularistic *Weltanschauungen*.

It is likewise the pietistic understanding of the Lutheran law/gospel distinction[4] which led him to identify secularism as a part of the work of the law. On this basis Christian man is to encourage secular man further into secularism. Secularism is actually developed in two stages, as Heim understands it. The first stage is the technological stage in which man believes that he is the triumphant lord of all. He has no need of God. The second stage dawns when man finds that his lordship is empty and meaningless. It is only from the depths of despair in this second stage that man can cry out the significant question and seek for God. Christians should encourage secular man to the point of despair. This is the negative aspect of their work, and this is one aspect of the work of the law. The positive aspect is to present to despairing man a world view which would make possible his understanding of the "space" of God.[1] What Heim is saying is that the work of the law, i.e., secularism, is ultimately to lead man to a deep despair, i.e., Angst. Heim writes, ". . . this hopeless renunciation of mine springs from an egoism . . . which I share with all my fellowmen."[2] In this conjoining of the Lutheran law/gospel distinction with the modern phenomenon of secularism, Heim formulates what is actually a kind of existentialist or anthropological starting point for Christian theology. This for Barth was psychologism and legality "under the yoke of which we neither must nor should bend."[3] While Barth and Heim may disagree at this point, the fact remains that the disagreement is rooted in Heim's pietistic interpretation of the law/gospel relationship. As was seen in the thought of Luther, this distinction between law and gospel does not of necessity lead to a renunciation of the secular.[4] What happens in Heim's attempt to answer the challenge of secularism is that the historic distinction between law and gospel has become a dichotomy. The problem of a proper theological recovery of the category of the secular is not solved, but still remains to plague the theologian: Is it possible to recover the category of the secular as a legitimate category within Christian dogmatics? Heim's

---

[1] See Heim, *Die lebendige Quelle: Predigten* (Tübingen: Osiander'sche Buchhandlung, 1927); *Die Kraft Gottes: Predigten* (Stuttgart: Quell-Verlag der Ev. Gesellschaft, 1936; *The Gospel and the Cross: A Second Series of Sermons*, trans. John Schmidt (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1937).

[2] Heim, *Ich gedenke der vorigen Zeiten*, pp. 139-141.

[3] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I, 1, trans. G. T. Thomson (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1960), p. 21.

[4] See Chapter II, D, 1 of this dissertation.

---

1. Heim, "Christian Faith and the Growing Power of Secularism," pp. 193-194.
2. Heim, Glaube und Denken, 1. Aufl., p. 409.
3. Karl Barth, op. cit.
4. See Chapter II, D, 1, d of this dissertation.

ultimate answer, whether he intends that it be so or not, is in the negative, for as long as one Weltanschauung competes with another there is no possibility of positively affirming the secular.

These critical remarks should not lead one to conclude that Heim's efforts through his considerable philosophical adeptness offer no positive contribution to the continuing discussion of a theological understanding of the secular. One may question, and indeed one must question, the feasibility of replacing one Weltanschauung with another. At the same time, Heim has in his analysis of contemporary secularism gone to the heart of one of the major crises of the twentieth century theological world. The presence of secularism in such potent force reveals that a part of the modern dilemma is a crisis over the issue of transcendence. Heim is unquestionably correct in assuming that without a transcendent God man is left the victim of his own polarizing drives toward relativism or absolutism. The positive values of the saeculum cannot be maintained without at the same moment the recognition that the saeculum is the creation of a Creator-God. In other words, there is no possibility of maintaining a positive assessment of the secular without a recognition of the transcendent power from which the secular derives its integrity. Heim's analysis at this point cannot be questioned. There is a profound sense in which Heim's ultimate "either/or" existential question must be faced in all its starkness. The presence of secularism is at the same moment the crisis of transcendence.

Rather than interpreting the secularistic dilemma as a demand for a new world view predicated upon a new manner of understanding transcendence, Heim might have set himself to what might seem a more modest task, and yet in the end a more beneficial one. It has been pointed out that a proper recovery of the secular demands a serious reckoning with the temporal understanding of the world as a creation which has been fulfilled and redeemed in the event of Christ and which awaits its final consummation.[1] In short, the movement from creation through redemption to consummation is that which frees man from any necessity to absolutize his worldly existence and, hence, to fall into a secularism. Hence, we have called for a recovery of a type of _Heilsgeschichte_ as the theological structure which can best give a positive assessment of the secular and at the same time avoid the pitfall of secularism. The _Heilsgeschichte_ is not divorced from secular history, but it is not identical with secular history. Rather, it is the transcendent dimension of those events which give secular history its true meaning. Heim's delineation of the concept of _dimensionality_ offers one of the most helpful suggestions as to how the theologian might still speak of the acts of God in history and hold that these acts possess a transcendent thrust. Rather than a full-fledged _Weltanschauung_ predicated upon this new discovery of non-objectifiable dimensions, it would have been more helpful had Heim applied his concept of _dimensionality_ paradigmatically to a _Heilsgeschichte_ construct as a possible means for a theological recovery of the secular.[2]

---

[1] See Chapter II, A of this dissertation.

[2] For a fuller application of this suggestion see Chapter VI of this dissertation where Heim's _dimensionality_ is utilized in a _Heilsgeschichte_ approach to a theological reconstruction.

IV. DIETRICH BONHOEFFER AND THE QUESTION OF THE SECULAR: SECULAR MATURITY

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the development of the concept of the secular or the natural in the thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In the English speaking world the recent theological dialogue concerning the secular has centered almost exclusively on the theology of Bonhoeffer. Most of these treatments have focused on what is called "the later Bonhoeffer," i.e., the Bonhoeffer of the "prison period."[1] The intention of this chapter is to show that the themes of the later period, e.g., the world come of age, holy worldliness, the nonreligious interpretation of biblical ideas, and the end of religion, are not _de novo_ of the later period, but that an accurate interpretation of these themes is dependent upon viewing the Bonhoeffer _corpus_ as a whole and thereby seeing the beginnings of these themes in his earlier writings. Such a method of investigation and analysis will reveal the actual _Grundlage_ from which Bonhoeffer developed these themes. Such a method of investigation and analysis will also reveal that much of the contemporary material on Bonhoeffer is remiss in its interpretation of the theologian by not considering these themes in their total historical and theological context. Before beginning an exposition of the themes which populate much of the contemporary discussion of Bonhoeffer and his treatment of the secular, it would be wise to examine the earlier writings to see if there is not a line of continuity from these writings to the later period.

---

[1] Most notable in the English speaking world are the following treatments which rely majorly upon the later writings: M. C. Ebersole, _Christian Faith and Man's Religion_ (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1961); William Hamilton, _The New Essence of Christianity_ (New York: Association Press, 1961); Karl T. Schmidt, _Rediscovering the Natural in Protestant Theology_ (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962); Ronald Gregor Smith, _The New Man_ (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956); Daniel Jenkins, _Beyond Religion_ (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962). The most notable and controversial work on the German scene depending upon the later period is Hanfried Mueller, _Von der Kirche zur Welt: ein Beitrag zu der Beziehung des Wortes Gottes auf die societas in D. Bonhoeffers theologischer Entwicklung_ (Leipzig: Koehlert Amelang, 1961).

A. The Church, Christ and the World in the Early Writings of Bonhoeffer[1]

Rather than to isolate these themes, the church, Christ and the world, into separate categories as systematic theology does, it would be truer to Bonhoeffer's thought and style to deal with them together. Throughout Bonhoeffer's writings in all periods of his activity these three themes are dealt with conjointly. They cannot be separated without doing irreparable harm to them as themes and to Bonhoeffer as a theologian.

As Eberhard Bethge has documented so conclusively,[2] the overwhelming emphasis in the theology of Bonhoeffer is the concrete nature of the message being proclaimed and explicated. For Bonhoeffer this is not a concern of practical theology, e.g., how can the Christian message be made concrete? It is rather that the Christian message is itself concrete. The concreteness of the Christian message is, therefore, "this-worldly," in that it is a proclamation in the concrete reality of the church, a proclamation of the concrete reality of Christ, in the arena of the real which is the world.

---

[1] By "early writings" is meant such basic works of Bonhoeffer as The Communion of Saints, trans. R. Gregor Smith (New York: Harper and Row, 1963); Act and Being, trans. Bernard Noble (New York: Harper and Row, 1961); Christologie in Gesammelte Schriften, III, 166-242 (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1961), and Thy Kingdom Come in John Godsey, Preface to Bonhoeffer (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965).

[2] Eberhard Bethge, "The Challenge of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life and Theology," The Chicago Theological Seminary Register, LI, No. 2 (February 1961), 1-38.

1. The Communion of the Saints

The concrete nature of the church Bonhoeffer hammered home repeatedly. The concrete revelation of God of which the church is a part is never isolated from the world of men.

> Man is not conceived of by God, the all-embracing Person, as an isolated, individual being, but as in natural communication with other men, and in his relation with them not satisfying just one side of his otherwise close spiritual existence, but rather discovering in this relation his reality, that is, his life as an I. . . . God does not desire a history of individual men, but the history of the community of men. Nor does he desire a community which absorbs the individual into itself, but a community of men.[1]

But this concreteness of the church must be made more explicit. For Bonhoeffer it is fatal to view the concreteness of the church as the result of the religious motives of people joining to create an empirical community. This is the fallacy of religion.[2] On the other hand, it is equally fatal not to treat man seriously and thereby to identify the church with the Kingdom of God. This is the fallacy of much theology.[1] The concrete nature of the church has its basis in the concrete reality of God and his revelation. "The concept of the church is possible only in the sphere of reality based on God; that is, it is not deducible."[2] One does not, therefore, deduce from the revelation of God in Christ the necessity of the church. The church is itself a part of the concrete reality of that revelation. If the church were a reason deduced from the revelation, then it would be abstract. Rather than an abstract deduction, the church is the concrete necessary presupposition of relationship with Christ.[3]

---

[1] Bonhoeffer, *The Communion of Saints*, p. 52.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

> The Christian concept of the church is reached only by way of the concept of revelation. But once the claim of the church has been accepted, it is as superfluous as it is impossible to prove its general necessity. The situation is the same as with the Christological attempts to prove the necessity of redemption, after its reality has been comprehended. Only by first believingly making the meaning of redemption one's own can one clearly see what makes this reality necessary. Only from reality can we deduce necessity in dogmatics. This is basic to the concept revelation.[4]

In essence, Bonhoeffer is steering a course free from the pitfalls of a religious understanding of the church, whether this understanding be grounded in a community gathered with religious motivations or a transcendent reality called the Kingdom of God. Already in his first major writing Bonhoeffer is appealing for revelation instead of religion, the church instead of simply a religious community. Already faith's battle against religion is afoot, and the battlecry is the appeal for revelation as concretion.

---

[1] Ibid., p. 88.
[2] Ibid., p. 89.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., p. 97.

The revelation is as concrete as this: *Christus als Gemeinde existierend* ("Christ existing as community").[1]

> The social significance of Christ is decisive. He is only present in the church, that is, where the Christian community is united by preaching and the Lord's Supper for brotherly love. . . . The church is the presence of Christ, as Christ is the presence of God.[2]

Since the church is precisely this concrete for Bonhoeffer, it cannot be divided into two spheres, i.e., its worldly manifestation and its divine reality. For Bonhoeffer there is no spiritual without the material. In *Life Together* on the basis of the precise understanding of the church as concrete and incarnational Bonhoeffer warned against conceiving the church as a "spiritual reality": "God hates visionary dreaming; it makes the dreamer proud and pretentious."[3] The church cannot be divided in such a fashion for not only does such a separation create factions, it is also a theological distortion of the concrete reality.

> This idea, however, is a great delusion. According to all experience the truth is just the opposite. . . . A purely spiritual relationship is not only dangerous but also an altogether abnormal thing.[4]

---

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 100, 101, 102, 135-6, 139, 143, 145, 147, 149, 160, 180, 197, 203.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
3. Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. J. W. Doberstein (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 26.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Already Bonhoeffer is addressing himself to the issue of the interpretation of faith which Bonhoeffer later called a "non-religious interpretation" versus a religious interpretation. In this earliest writing Bonhoeffer sees that spiritual or religious interpretation easily becomes individualistic, and such an understanding of the world and faith compartmentalizes the two into separate spheres. Such compartmentalization the concrete reality of revelation will not allow. Already Bonhoeffer in his stress upon the church as a part of the concrete reality of revelation is laying the groundwork for that which will come later when he speaks of a "this-worldly transcendence." Revelation means not a retreat into the compartment of an ethereal "beyond," but it is a concretion in this historically and sociologically shaped world.

The ethical dimension of this concrete revelation is stressed by Bonhoeffer as he adopts the "I-Thou" terminology of Buber and Grisebach to speak of the social reality of the community and to show how this social reality is related with the reality of the revelation. The church which is "Christ existing as community" is the community of those who discover their "I" through encounter with the "Thou" of the other person.[1] This is the ethical reality of the church for "the Thou-form is to be defined as the other who places me before a moral decision."[2] Man lives in solidarity apart from Christ and therefore apart from the Christian community. It is only in the Christian community that the separation which man experiences can be reconciled, for the Christian community is life lived in the love of Christ. The new life which is made possible by the concrete revelation is the new life in the community.

---

[1] Bonhoeffer, The Communion of Saints, p. 33.
[2] Ibid., pp. 33-34.

> That is why the principle of vicarious action can become fundamental for the church of God in and through Christ. Not 'solidarity,' which is never possible between Christ and man, but vicarious action, is the life-principle of the new mankind.[1]

Does not this emphasis on the new mankind as a community of vicarious action ring with preludial sounds of what will come later when Bonhoeffer in prison spoke of the Christian as the one free for the other person, as Christ was supremely free for men?[2]

What relationship does the I-Thou relation within the community have with the reality of the revelation of God? Previously philosophers have had difficulty coming to terms with a God-man I-Thou relation. But, says Bonhoeffer, there is no reason why such terminology should not be employed.

> Now it does not conflict with such a concept of God that he may be experienced by us as a Thou, that is, as an ethical barrier; further, this experience of God as Thou has *a priori* no effect on his I, either as being individually limited or as itself ethically addressed. If God is for us -- that is, is active will over against us -- this does not mean that we are a barrier for God. This has its application for the concept for God. God is impenetrable Thou, and his metaphysical personality, conceived of as absolute self-consciousness and self-activity, does not affect what we have said about his being as I.[3]

---

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 107.
[2] Bonhoeffer, *Prisoner for God*, trans. R. H. Fuller (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954), pp. 237-238.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

Therefore for Bonhoeffer each human Thou is the image of God's Thou under which the believer experiences God. It is significant that here in this early writing Bonhoeffer refers to the Thou as an ethical or social kind of transcendence. This is the father to the concept to appear fifteen years later under the terminology of a "this-worldly transcendence."[1]

From a careful analysis of The Communion of Saints it can be seen that Bonhoeffer is arguing for a strictly incarnational-based ecclesiology. The church is a part of the concreteness of the revelation given; therefore, the church is actually "Christ existing as community." Bonhoeffer cannot conceive of a knowledge of God which is sufficiently concrete apart from the concreteness of the revelation as this is possible for man in the church. This emphasis upon concreteness will later issue in a call for a "this-worldly transcendence." What must be seen here, however, is that this transcendence while it is both ethical and social is at the same time a transcendence founded upon a high Christology and an equally high ecclesiology. In his emphasis upon the concreteness of the revelational-based church Bonhoeffer battles against any kind of spiritual or religious concept of the church which would create a dichotomy between the world and the spiritual. In this attempt to ground the church in revelation rather than to postulate a "spiritual" or "religious" community Bonhoeffer has attempted to interpret the reality of the community within the context of faith in contrast to "religion." The rejection of a "religiously-conceived" community in favor of the revelational community of faith parallels his later appeal for a "non-religious" approach to the Christian faith. What must be underscored, however, is that this attack on "religion" is grounded in the revelational claims of faith. The emphasis upon the vicarious nature of the church and the new life within the community has close affinity with the "man for others" in the prison papers. Still again attention should be called to the fact that the "man for others" is not a purely ethical or moral category, but the real meaning of this term is to be found in the particular Christology of vicarious sacrifice which undergirds the ecclesiology of _The Communion of Saints_. In short the themes of the later Bonhoeffer are found in embryonic form in this earliest work, and it would be sound methodological procedure to interpret these later themes in the light of the Christology and ecclesiology from which they have emerged.

---

[1] It should be noted that to conceive of God as the Thou encountered through the Thou of the other person in no way empties God of his "otherness." Bethge, ibid., p. 8, is correct in affirming that there "cannot be any speculation about a God before or outside this concreteness." But what is at issue here is a rejection of a neo-Kantian transcendentalism, not a swallowing of transcendence into immanence!

2. _Act and Being_

It is significant that Bonhoeffer's second major work, _Act and Being_, was a thorough and systematic attempt to examine the concreteness of the revelation on which he had predicated his ecclesiology in the former work. While Bonhoeffer seems at this point to possess many affinities with Karl Barth in the emphasis on revelation, certain significant differences appear. These differences are essential to an understanding of Bonhoeffer's concept of the world and the revelational basis which he gives to this concept. It is unquestionable that

Bonhoeffer having rejected the docile liberalism of his old professors at Berlin stood strongly within the new dialectical stream of thought promulgated by Barth and others. Still there were problems which disturbed his mind.

It seemed to Bonhoeffer that in Barth's attempt to speak of God in revelational terms as the ganz anders, and, thereby, to preserve his transcendent freedom the concreteness of revelation so necessary was endangered. Barth had written in his Christian Dogmatics of 1927:

> Now it would follow that the relationship between God and man in which God's revelation may truly be imparted to me, a man, must be a free, not a static relationship, in the sense that its very constancy can never mean anything other than constancy in a transaction not simply continuous, but at every moment beginning, in all seriousness at the beginning. It may never be conceived as already given, already obtaining, or even as analogous to a natural law or a mathematical function. Rather, one must always think of it as "act-ual" (aktuell), that is, with all the instability of a deed in the course of execution.[1]

While Bonhoeffer has appreciation for this emphasis on the unverdingliche nature of God, still he suspects that a form of neo-Kantian transcendentalism is lurking behind such a statement. The emphasis in Barth falls too heavily on the contingency of God. This reduces revelation to pure acts. In what is probably the most significant passage in Act and Being Bonhoeffer makes his reply to Barthian transcendentalism:

---

1. As quoted in Bonhoeffer, Act and Being, p. 81.

> In revelation it not so much a question of God's freedom beyond it, i.e., his eternal isolation and aseity, but rather of God's coming forth, his coming out of himself in the revelation, of his given Word, of his covenant in which he has bound himself -- of his freedom which finds its strongest attestation precisely in his having freely bound himself to historical man, in his placing himself at man's disposal. God is not free from man, but for man. Christ is the Word of the freedom of God. God is "there," which is to say: not in eternal non-objectivity, but -- let us say it with all due caution -- "haveable," graspable in his Word within the church.[1]

Once again Bonhoeffer strikes the changes on the concreteness of revelation as "Christ existing as the community." The freedom of God is the freedom for man, and that freedom is found in Christ for man as the community. Little is to be gained by Barth's heavy emphasis on the Unverfügbarkeit of God, for while this stresses the contingency of God it slights the continuity of God for and with his people.

Bonhoeffer has his finger on the weak theological pulse of Barth at this point. With such utter transcendence and contingency the Immanuel (God with us) character of revelation is severely strained. In this strain the problem of faith and obedience for the community becomes all the more problematic. The problem is resolved for Bonhoeffer in his insistence upon the concreteness of revelation as the church which is a unity of act and being.[2] The church as the presupposition to grasping the revelation is at the same time the place where man's existence (Dasein) is truly understood. The understanding of man's existence under the revelation of God is possible because of the *pro nobis* character of the revelation in Jesus Christ. Here one is freed from the dilemma of the objective and non-objective character of revelation.

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 90f.
[2] Ibid., pp. 118-119.

> The being of revelation, as hovering between the objective and the non-objective, is "person" -- the revealed person of God and the personal community of which that person is the foundation. Here the transcendental thesis of "being only in the act," and the original ontological principle of being independent of the act, unexpectedly coalesce.[1]

3. *Christologie*

This coalescence in the *pro nobis*[2] character of the revelation in Jesus Christ was accentuated in Bonhoeffer's *Christologie* lectures of 1933.[3] The definition of God is not derived from reason or experience, but it is in his incarnation and humiliation that God is for man.

> If Jesus Christ is to be described as God, it will not do to speak of the divine essence, of his omnipotence or of his omniscience; but we must speak of this weak man among sinners, of his manger and of his Cross. . . . In Christology one looks at the entire historical man Jesus and declares about him that he is God.[4]

---

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[2] It should be carefully noted that Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the *pro nobis* character does not exclude attention to the *extra nos* character also.

[3] Bonhoeffer, *Christologie* in *Gesammelte Schriften*, III.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 190. Jaroslav Pelikan in "Bonhoeffer's Christologie of 1933," *The Place of Bonhoeffer*, ed. Martin Marty (New York: Association Press, 1962), pp. 163-164, wonders if there is not here in Bonhoeffer a Christomonistic pattern which comes close to an immanentism. Does such a Christology which makes God "haveable" not play into the hands of those who desire to propagate a direct and uncritical acceptance of the world? Pelikan sees that Bonhoeffer guards himself against this in the *Christologie*. This serves to underscore, however, that the interpretation of Bonhoeffer in his later period must be placed in the context of his *Christologie* lectures of 1933, lest severe distortion be the result.

Paul's words in Romans 8:3, ". . . sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin . . . ," loom large in Bonhoeffer's Christological considerations at this point.

Bonhoeffer sees that the danger in this transcendental objectification (in spite of all the verbage concerning Unverfügbarkeit) is that very easily revelation can be identified with doctrine. Could this be the background of his accusation of Barth's theology in the later period as being an Offenbarungspositivismus?[1] In any account such a reduction is what Bonhoeffer in The Life of Discipleship called "cheap grace."[2] The error in this form of transcendentalism Bonhoeffer pointed out was:

> Even a doctrine of the merciful God, even one which states that wherever man and God come together, there the Cross must stand -- even such a doctrine is no stumbling block (at least to our modern way of thinking), but rather a wholly welcome addition to our "system." The stumbling block, the scandal, arises only when our existence is really affected, when we not only hear of the Cross and judgment, but, hearing, must needs deliver ourselves to them, that grace may descend.[3]

What is evident is that while Barth and Bonhoeffer stand together at many points, and many times at basic points, there is a difference in Christological orientation. They are both Christocentric thinkers, but the difference within this context is subtle, if not great. Barth

---

1. See Regin Prenter, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer und Karl Barths Offenbarungspostivismus," Die mündige Welt, Band III, ed. Eberhard Bethge, (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1960), 36-41.
2. Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship, trans. R.H. Fuller (New York: Macmillan Paperbacks, 1963), pp. 45-46.
3. Bonhoeffer, Act and Being, p. 109.

aligns himself with the Calvinistic tradition which insisted that *finitum incapax infiniti*, while Bonhoeffer joins with Luther in protesting this by claiming that *finitum capax infiniti*. Christologically Barth stresses the sovereignty of God revealed in the Resurrection, while Bonhoeffer stresses the revelation of God in the weakness of Christ in the Cross. One is a *theologia gloriae*, while the other is a *theologia crucis*. Bonhoeffer elects the accent to fall upon the weakness of God in his suffering and sees this humiliation of God continuing in the Word, in the sacraments, and in the community.[1] The result of such a Christological formulation as Bonhoeffer's is to underscore precisely the earliest avowed intention of Bonhoeffer, i.e., the concreteness of revelation. The transcendental concept pushes God from the world to insure his *freedom*, while the radical understanding of his suffering and weakness brings him into the world *free for man*. This has the effect of saying that the reality (*Wirklichkeit*) of the world can be understood only when the concreteness of the revelation of God in Christ has been grasped as that revelation is made concrete through the community.

---

[1] In John Godsey's excellent treatment of Bonhoeffer's thought, *The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), the distinctions in Christology between Barth and Bonhoeffer are ignored. One could gain the impression that the two are really together theologically on the essential issues. Godsey has corrected this impression in his essay, "Barth and Bonhoeffer," *The Drew Gateway*, XXXIII (1962), 3-20. With these distinctions in mind some question must be directed toward the work of Jürgen Moltmann, *Herrschaft Christi und soziale Wirklichkeit nach Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1959), in which it is claimed that Bonhoeffer's ethics is actually a variation of Barth's Christocracy. In fairness to Barth, however, mention should be made of a significant change in Christological direction in his thought when in 1956 he presented his lecture on *The Humanity of God*, trans. J. N. Thomas and T. Wieser (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1960). Cf. especially p. 42. Certainly Barth knows something of the humiliation of Christ in *Church Dogmatics*, IV, 1, trans. G. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1956). Yet even here the humiliation is the fact of the incarnation, God's having assumed human flesh, and not an emphasis upon the actual suffering as such.

4. Thy Kingdom Come

A lecture prepared by Bonhoeffer for students and faculty of a school in Potsdam-Hermannswerder in 1932, one year prior to his delivering the Christologie lectures at Berlin, draws attention all the more forcibly to the "this-worldly" direction of his thought.

> We are otherworldly, or we are secular -- but in either case this means we no longer believe in God's Kingdom. We are hostile to the earth because we want to be better than the earth, or we are hostile to God because he deprives us of the earth, our mother; we seek refuge from the power of the earth, or we plant ourselves stubbornly and firmly upon it -- but in either case we are not the wanderers who love the earth that bears them. Wanderers who love the earth aright do so only because it is on this earth that they make their approach to that alien land which they love above all else, except for which they would not be wandering at all. Only wanderers of this kind, who love both earth and God at the same time, can believe in the Kingdom of God.[1]

To turn from the "this-worldly" aspect of the Christian faith and to take offense with the "worldly" is to retreat into a "religious" way of understanding. It is to make faith an "other-worldly" compartment within this world. It is an attempt to flee from this world.

---

[1] Bonhoeffer, Thy Kingdom Come, in John D. Godsey, ed. and trans. Preface to Bonhoeffer (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 28.

> We are otherworldly -- ever since we hit upon the devious trick of being religious, yes even "Christian," at the expense of the earth. Otherworldliness affords a splendid environment in which to live. Whenever life begins to become oppressive and troublesome a person just leaps into the air with a bold kick and soars relieved and unencumbered into so-called eternal fields. He leaps over the present. . . . Otherworldliness also makes it easy to preach and to speak words of comfort. An otherworldly church can be certain that it will in no time win over all the weaklings, all who are only too glad to be deceived and deluded, all utopianists, all disloyal sons of the earth. He (Christ) does not lead man in a religious flight from this world to other worlds beyond; rather, he gives him back to the earth as its loyal son. Be not otherworldly, but be strong![1]

In fact, for Bonhoeffer "otherworldliness" is actually secularism. The religious retreat from the earth is a denial of the concreteness of God's revelation in Christ. It is a denial of the suffering and weak Christ who is the foundation of true "worldliness" and thereby the foundation of true faith.

> . . . we are children of the world. Whoever feels that what has been said thus far does not apply to him at all had better watch out that what is now about to be said does not strike painfully home. We have fallen into secularism, and by secularism I mean pious, Christian secularism. Not the godlessness of atheism or cultural Bolshevism, but the Christian renunciation of God as the Lord of the earth. In this renunciation it becomes evident that we are indeed bound to the earth.[2]

If the Christian chooses this path of "otherworldliness" he finds himself as a Christian concerned with a strategy for reclaiming the earth, i.e., the secular, for God who is in reality already the Lord of the earth through his condescendence in Jesus Christ. The Christian,

---

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

therefore, pits the church against the world, religion against worldliness. The result is secularistic compartmentalization of life. The Kingdom of God becomes for him a bulwark against the world. This is in actuality an attempt to hide from the concrete will of God.

> It is not God's will that any man, on the sheer strength of his own superabundant power, should take over for God. . . . God himself intends to be Lord on earth, and he regards all man's exuberant zeal on His behalf as a real disservice. Herein lies our Christian secularism. . .[1]

In contrast to such a presumptuous strategy to save the world or remnants of it for God, the Christian proclamation is the proclamation of the Kingdom of God. The meaning of this Kingdom is that "God is always both the one who binds himself to the earth and the one who breaks its curse."[2] This binding is accomplished through the condescension of God, i.e., through his weakness in the Incarnation and the Cross.

> The earth to which God binds himself is the earth he preserves, the earth that is fallen, lost, and cursed. He binds himself to it as he does to his work. But where God is, there also is his kingdom. God always comes with his kingdom. His kingdom must go the same way he goes. It comes with him to the earth, and it is present among us in no other way than in a twofold form: first, as the final kingdom of the miraculous resurrection that breaks through, negates, overcomes, and destroys all kingdoms of the earth, all the kingdoms built by man, which are subject to the curse of death; and, second, and simultaneously, as the kingdom of order that affirms and preserves the earth with its laws, communities, and history.[3]

---

1. Ibid., p. 31.
2. Ibid., p. 39.
3. Ibid.

In this sense Bonhoeffer seeks to unite the two spheres or realms which have been so problematic in historic Lutheranism. The kingdom of God assumes its form in the church as a witness to the end of the law of death under which the world stands cursed. The kingdom of God assumes its form in the state as the "left hand" of God preserving order and preventing the world from "flying to pieces." The function of the kingdom in the state "is not to create new life, but to preserve the life that is given."[1]

To flee from the concrete reality of the kingdom of God is in reality to flee unto one's self, and this is sin.

> Whoever evades the earth in order to find God, finds only himself. Whoever evades God in order to find the earth does not find God's earth; he finds only the jolly battleground of a war which he himself incites, a war between the good people and the bad, the pious and the blasphemers -- in short, he finds himself.[2]

Bonhoeffer would seem to indicate that much so-called "religious" talk about the world and God's relationship to it is not really talk about God after all. It is really one's talking to himself and about himself. This is always the foible of individualistic piety which shuts oneself from others and from the world. The immediate consequence, as witnessed in the above citation, is division, the invidious compartmentalizing of people. This passage undoubtedly fills in the gaps of a fragmentary passage from the prison papers when Bonhoeffer writes:

---

1. Ibid., pp. 40-41.
2. Ibid., p. 32.

> I often ask myself why a Christian instinct draws me more to the religionless than to the religious, by which I mean not with any intention of evangelizing them, but rather, I might almost say, in "brotherhood." While I often shrink with religious people from speaking of God by name -- because that name somehow seems to me here not to ring true, and I strike myself as rather dishonest (it is especially bad when others start talking in religious jargon: then I dry up completely and feel somehow oppressed and ill at ease) -- with people who have no religion I am able on occasion to speak of God quite openly and as it were naturally.[1]

This lecture of 1932 boldly affirming the "this-worldly" nature of the concrete Christian revelation begins to prepare the way for the emergence of the concept of the "natural" or the world in the _Ethics_,[2] written and hidden between 1940 and 1943. During the period of these early writings Bonhoeffer had focused almost exclusive attention on the concretion of revelation in Christ and through the church. As has already been seen, this in no sense meant that the world or the secular was slighted. Indeed the very foundation for the affirmation of the secular is to be found in the radical Christocentric approach to theology which is to be found in these works and in the particular _Kondeszens_-Christology which Bonhoeffer elucidates. Attention is now turned with this foundation as background to the _Ethics_ and the emerging concept of the "natural."

B. The Natural in Bonhoeffer's _Ethics_

Bethge has referred to a "switch" in Bonhoeffer's thinking during the period which produced the Ethics and Prisoner for God.[1] There is certainly something of a change, but "switch" is surely too radical a word to describe the course which Bonhoeffer followed in his later period. To insist that there are themes in the later works which one could not have predicted is one thing; to insist that these themes mark a radical turn is something else. Godsey's assessment is perhaps more accurate.

---

[1] Bonhoeffer, _Prisoner for God_, p. 123f.

[2] Bonhoeffer, _Ethics_, trans. N. H. Smith; ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961).

> There can be little doubt that the theology of Bonhoeffer expressed in his Ethics is a fairly direct development of his thought of the earlier periods. Bonhoeffer's former concentration on the exclusive claim of Jesus Christ, which was necessary during the German Church Struggle, led ineluctably to the recognition and exposition of Jesus Christ's total claim upon all spheres of life in the world. The more firmly one believes in Christ as Lord, the more extensive becomes the domination of his Lordship.[2]

This last sentence is very close to Bonhoeffer's own words in the Ethics:

> The more exclusively we acknowledge and confess Christ as our Lord, the more fully the wide range of His dominion will be disclosed to us.[3]

Bethge has categorized the theological productivity of Bonhoeffer into three periods with the themes of church, world, and forsakenness of God developing progressively.[4] Godsey in following the schema suggests the categories of theological foundation, theological application and theological fragmentation.[1] Godsey's categories suggest more the theological method than actual theological content. Another way of systematizing the progression of Bonhoeffer's thought is to see it moving from *concretion of Christ* to the *exclusiveness of Christ* to the *dominion or Lordship of Christ*. Such a *schema* has the merit of maintaining the emphasis where Bonhoeffer seemingly would have it put, i.e., focused on the Christological issue. This would indicate the intention of *Communion of Saints* and *Act and Being* to be concretion of revelation, the intention of the *Christologie* lectures of 1933 and the lectures on the kingdom of 1932[2] along with the less theoretically oriented writings, *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together*, to be the exclusiveness of Christ,[3] and the intention of the *Ethics* and *Prisoner for God* to be the dominion of Christ. There is more involved in this suggestion than simple schematization, for what is here suggested is a more exclusive concentration on the Christological question in Bonhoeffer than has yet been offered in secondary interpretations.[4]

---

[1] Bethge, Ibid., p. 28.

[2] Godsey, The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, p. 203.

[3] Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 180.

[4] Eberhard Bethge, as quoted in Godsey, The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, pp. 19, 80, 195.

---

1. These are the titles of the three major chapters of Godsey's work.
2. Bonhoeffer, *Thy Kingdom Come*.
3. In this interpretation the period which produced *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together* does not prove to be so troublesome for the modern interpreter. They are not departures from Bonhoeffer's major concern, but they are evidences of this major concern applied in specific historical circumstances. In this sense these two works do not supply the interpreter of Bonhoeffer with theological content and direction so much as they supply the student of Bonhoeffer with practical information regarding the application of the theological conviction of the exclusiveness of Christ.
4. Gerhard Ebeling in his essay, "Die nicht-religiöse Interpretation biblischer Begriffe," *Die mündige Welt*, Band II, ed. E. Bethge, (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1956), pp. 12-73, comes closer to a consistent Christological interpretation of Bonhoeffer. It remains to be seen just what Ebeling would do with other themes than the one specific theme on which this essay focuses.

This interpretation would insist that all other themes, i.e., worldliness, world come of age, nonreligious interpretation, are derivative themes drawn from Bonhoeffer's passionate quest for the meaning of Christ in the world. In this light Bonhoeffer, even more than Barth, was concerned to be a Christocentric theologian.

Bonhoeffer seems to be aware that the themes to come in the later period were not a departure from but a continuation and derivation of what he said before of the revelation in Christ.

> Again and again I am driven to think about my activities which are now concerned so much with the secular field. . . . I feel the resistance growing in me against all religiosity (*das "Religiöse"*), sometimes reaching the level of an instinctive horror -- surely, this is not good either. Yet I am not a religious nature (*eine religiöse Natur*) at all. But all the time I am forced to think of God, of Christ, of genuineness (*Echtheit*), life, freedom, charity -- that matters for me. What causes me uneasiness is just the religious clothing. Do you understand? This is no new concept at all, no new insights, but because I believe an idea will come to burst upon me I let things run and do not offer resistance. In this sense I understand my present activity in the secular sector.[1]

Bethge has delineated for Bonhoeffer scholars the historical development of the fragmentary writings which make up the *Ethics*.[2] He has grouped the chapters into four periods. Such an analysis offers much help to the student seeking a historical analysis of the material. The treatment below departs from this historical outline, but not without taking the historical circumstances behind this development seriously. There are many themes in the *Ethics*, and the one which calls for attention

---

1. Bonhoeffer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, 420.
2. See Eberhard Bethge, "The Editing and Publishing of the Bonhoeffer Papers," *The Andover Newton Bulletin*, LII, No. 2 (December 1959).

here is the concept of the natural. Therefore attention is given to Bonhoeffer's treatment of this theme, rather than a summary statement of the contents and historical development of the Ethics.

1. Toward Defining the Natural

It was a bold move on the part of Bonhoeffer to conceive the possibility of writing an ethics. Karl Barth's influence had caused a foreclosure on this kind of enterprise which had once been such a popular pursuit of Christian theologians and philosophers. This did not deter Bonhoeffer however. He sensed clearly that "the concept of the natural has fallen into discredit in Protestant ethics."[1] Bonhoeffer meant by this term that which is simply man, human life itself. This is not intended to imply simply man as an individual, but it is extended to include that which in society makes possible the essentials of society as such. The loss of the natural has brought serious consequences to Protestantism in that it is "no longer able to return a clear word of direction in answer to the burning questions of natural life."[2]

A fuller definition of the natural must be attempted at a later stage in this discussion, but for preliminary purposes, Bonhoeffer's concise statement which is his way of insisting that the natural is not a norm selected by man or men, but it is the given in God's creation, will bring light to the subject.

---

1. Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 101.
2. Ibid.

> From this there follows a conclusion that is of crucial importance, namely, that the natural can never be something that is determined by any single part of any single authority within the fallen world. Neither the individual nor any community or institution within the preserved world establishes and decides what is natural; but it is already established and decided in advance, in the sense that the individual, the community and the institution all receive their allotted share in it. What is natural cannot be determined by any arbitrary decision, and indeed whatever is set up in this arbitrary manner by an individual, a society or an institution will necessarily collapse and destroy itself in the encounter with the natural which is already established.[1]

The natural is but another term for that which was created good by God. The problem which Christian ethics faces is that the world which was created good is now a fallen world. The natural has been distorted by sin. In other words, the natural and the unnatural are both a part of the world. The world has departed from God's original intention for it. Christian theology has responded with such predominant emphasis on grace in the face of the unnatural that the entire discussion has become blurred and confused. This has produced, says Bonhoeffer, a lamentable situation.

> Before the light of grace everything human and natural sank into the night of sin, and now no one dared to consider the relative differences within the human and natural, for fear that by their so doing grace as grace would be diminished.[2]

This exclusive concentration on _gratia_ to the exclusion of _natura_ has brought tragic consequences to Protestantism. Through its adherence (and Bonhoeffer would suspect a distorted adherence) to _sola_ _gratia_,

---

1. _Ibid_., p. 104.
2. _Ibid_., p. 101.

Protestantism has negated the natural and has thereby lost the concept of the natural for Christian theology and ethics.

> The significance of the natural for the Gospel was obscured, and the Protestant Church was no longer able to return a clear word of direction in answer to the burning questions of natural life. She thus left countless human beings unanswered and unassisted in the midst of vitally important decisions, and confined herself more and more to an (orthodox, static) apology for the divine grace. . . . The consequences of this loss were grave and far-reaching. If there were no longer any relative distinctions to be made within the fallen creation, then the way was open for every kind of arbitrariness and disorder, and natural life, with its concrete decisions and orders, was no longer subject to responsibility to God. The sole antithesis to the natural was the Word of God; the natural was no longer contrasted with the unnatural. For in the presence of the Word of God both the natural and the unnatural were equally damned. And this meant complete disruption in the domain of natural life.[1]

What Bonhoeffer is seeking to do in this correction of the doctrine of grace is to correct its corollary, i.e., the doctrine of creation. The emphasis upon the fallenness of man and the world has tended to obscure a distinction which must be made between man's condition essentially and man's condition existentially. Man and the world are existentially fallen; at the same time they are essentially still the creation of God which is good. The distinction is between man's depravity and his essential nature. Classical Protestant theology confused the natural and the unnatural with its preponderant emphasis on depravity, and this it did for the sake of the doctrine of grace. Liberal Protestantism in the name of a broader doctrine of grace tended to obscure the unnatural in its tendency toward a supremely optimistic view of man and the world. Both are mistaken from Bonhoeffer's perspective.[1]

---

[1] Ibid.

To turn to another section in the Ethics one can see precisely why Bonhoeffer objects to this confusion in the name of grace. It is not simply a pragmatic objection rooted in the fact that the church finds itself with nothing constructive to say to man in the world, while this may be patently true. There is a deeper and more indigenous theological reason. What has happened in Protestantism's rejection of the natural through its refusal to make the necessary distinctions within the concepts of nature and the world is that Protestantism has succeeded in radically dividing the two -- grace and nature. Such a division is an impossibility for the theologian committed to the concreteness of revelation in Jesus Christ. Such a division would be theologically odious to the theologian who sees that the exclusiveness of Christ is rooted precisely in the fact that he has entered the natural, that he has assumed the frailty of flesh and blood, and has suffered the curse of death in this world. The Bonhoeffer of the Christologie and the Dein Reich Kommt can tolerate

---

1. See Karl T. Schmidt, Rediscovering the Natural in Protestant Theology (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962), pp. 22-34, for a discussion of evidences of these theological mistakes in contemporary theological literature. Schmidt singles his attention on Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, trans. P. S. Watson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), and strongly criticizes what Robert Clyde Johnson, "A Theologian of Synthesis," Theology Today, XV, No. 1 (April 1958), 36ff., has called the theology of "diastasis" in Nygren. In fairness to Nygren, Schmidt should also document his thesis with material from later writings of Nygren which would indicate that he is not as vulnerable at this point as Schmidt might suspect.

no such division.

> So long as Christ and the world are conceived as two opposing and mutually repellent spheres, man will be left in the following dilemma: he abandons reality as a whole, and places himself in one or other of the two spheres (the sphere of the rule of grace or the sphere of the rule of nature). He seeks Christ without the world, or he seeks the world without Christ.[1]

2. The "Ultimate" and the "Penultimate"

It is in this context that Bonhoeffer speaks his famous words about the "ultimate" and the "penultimate."[2] The basic premise here is that justification by faith is the "ultimate."

> The original and the essence of all Christian life are comprised in the one process or event which the Reformation called justification of the sinner by grace alone. The nature of the Christian life is disclosed not by what the man is in himself but by what he is in this event. The whole length and breadth of human life is here compressed into a single instant, a single point. The totality of life is encompassed in this event. . . . In the rescuing light man for the first time recognizes God and his neighbour. The labyrinth of the life he has so far led falls in ruin. Man is free for God and his brothers. . . . The past and the future of his life are merged in one in the presence of God.[3]

In Bonhoeffer's words the "penultimate" is that which prepares the way for the "ultimate." It is before the "ultimate," but it has its own free, autonomous right. The "penultimate" is the natural, while the "ultimate" is grace. Bonhoeffer speaks from practical experience:

---

[1] Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 63.

[2] As background for the following discussion see Jürgen Moltmann, "Die Wirklichkeit der Welt und Gottes konkretes Gebot nach Dietrich Bonhoeffer," Die mündige Welt, Band III, ed. E. Bethge (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1960), 42-67. Also see the important essay in this respect, Ernst Wolf, "Das Letzte und das Vorletzte," Die mündige Welt, Band IV (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1963), 17-32.

[3] Ibid., p. 79.

> So that this may become quite clear, let us ask why it is that precisely in thoroughly grave situations, for instance when I am with someone who has suffered a bereavement, I often decide to adopt a "penultimate" attitude, particularly when I am dealing with Christians, remaining silent as a sign that I share in the bereaved man's helplessness in the face of such a grievous event, and not speaking the biblical words of comfort which are, in fact, known to me and available to me. Why am I often unable to open my mouth, when I ought to give expression to the ultimate? And why, instead, do I decide on an expression of thoroughly penultimate human solidarity? Is it from mistrust of the power of the ultimate word? Is it from fear of men? Or is there some good positive reason for such an attitude, namely, that my knowledge of the word, my having it at my finger-tips, in other words my being, so to speak, spiritually master of the situation, bears only the appearance of the ultimate, but is in reality itself something entirely penultimate? Does one not in some cases, by remaining deliberately in the penultimate, perhaps point all the more genuinely to the ultimate, which God will speak in His own time (though indeed even then through a human mouth)? Does not this mean that, over and over again, the penultimate will be what commends itself precisely for the sake of the ultimate, and that it will have to be done not with a heavy conscience but with a clear one?[1]

While the "ultimate" is God's justification by grace through faith, this word comes to man who lives out his life in the "penultimate" rather than the "ultimate." This does not mean that the "ultimate" and the "penultimate" are radically separate and disparate entities. While the "penultimate" has its own autonomy, it is in a certain sense a preparation for the "ultimate." In truth, the relationship between the "ultimate" and the "penultimate" represents what Bonhoeffer considers to be the correct Christological order.

---

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

> Jesus is really man, and it is His will that we shall be men. He neither renders the human reality independent nor destroys it, but He allows it to remain as that which is before the last, as a penultimate which requires to be taken seriously in its own way, and yet not to be taken seriously, a penultimate which has become the outer covering of the ultimate.[1]

The Cross is a paradoxical point in which the "ultimate" and the "penultimate" are both focused.

> Jesus Christ the crucified -- this means that God pronounces its final condemnation on the fallen creation. The rejection of God on the cross of Jesus Christ contains within itself the rejection of the whole human race without exception. The cross of Jesus is the death sentence upon the world. . . . Yet the crucifixion of Jesus does not simply mean the annihilation of the created world, but under this sign of death, the cross, men are now to continue to live, to their own condemnation if they despise it, but to their own salvation if they give it its due. The ultimate has become real in the cross, as the judgment upon all that is penultimate, yet also as mercy towards that penultimate which bows before the judgment of the ultimate.[2]

The act of God in the Cross and Resurrection is "ultimate," i.e., it is the act of grace. Dialectically, while God's act is the divine judgment upon the secular or natural, it is at the same moment the merciful act of God allowing the secular to be what it really is, i.e., the world. Bonhoeffer is most careful to guard this dialectical character of grace. The "penultimate" must remain the "penultimate," but this is possible only in relation to the "ultimate."

---

[1] Ibid., p. 90.

[2] Ibid.

> Thus man remains man, even though he is a new, a risen man, who in no way resembles the old man. Until he crosses the frontier of his death, even though he has already risen again with Christ, he remains in the world of the penultimate, the world into which Jesus entered and the world in which the cross stands. Thus, so long as the earth continues, even the resurrection does not annul the penultimate, but the eternal life, the new life, breaks in with ever greater power into the earthly life and wins its space for itself within it.[1]

The Christological or atonement basis of the "penultimate" is, therefore, quite obvious. The "penultimate" does not determine the "ultimate," but the opposite is correct, i.e., the "ultimate" determines the "penultimate."

> Now it would be quite wrong, it would be robbing the ultimate, if we were to say, for example, that to be man is a precondition of justification by grace. On the contrary, it is only on the basis of the ultimate that we can know what it is to be man, so that manhood can be determined and established through justification. And yet the relationship is such that manhood precedes justification, and that from the standpoint of the ultimate it is necessary that it should precede it. The penultimate does not rob the ultimate of its freedom; but it is the freedom of the ultimate that validates the penultimate. And so, with all necessary reservations, it is now possible to speak of manhood, for example, as a penultimate to justification by faith. Only man can be justified, precisely because only he who is justified becomes "man."[2]

This is Bonhoeffer's manner of saying that through the Cross and Resurrection, man, i.e., the natural or the world, is brought to a relative but full autonomy.

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 90-91.
[2] Ibid., p. 91.

3. Bonhoeffer's Critique of Other Approaches

On this basis Bonhoeffer rejects various types of approaches to theological ethics in the past. It would clarify Bonhoeffer's understanding of the terms "ultimate," "penultimate" and "natural" if one were to examine his critique of the theological ethics of the past with these terms in view. This is an oblique approach to a fuller definition of terms, but it is an approach which will clarify more fully than mere definitional statements.[1] The first approach is that of the moral law ethics of Roman Catholicism. This position claims that all men possess reason and freedom of conscience, and thereby in this sense the basis of Christian ethics is first of all a natural ethics. Christian ethics is then a completion or augmenting of the natural ethics of man. The relationship between the natural and the realm of grace is predicated upon the ontological continuity between God and man.[2] Christian ethics is simply the sensitizing of the natural man, i.e., his conscience and reason.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century much of Protestant theological ethics was done in a similar fashion. On the German scene, Georg Wünsch[3] serves as an excellent example, while on the American scene, the Methodist Albert C. Knudson represents the same tendency.[4]

---

[1] See George W. Forell, "Realized Faith, the Ethics of Dietrich Bonhoeffer," The Place of Bonhoeffer, pp. 199-211, for a most helpful approach to this subject.

[2] See chapter II of this dissertation in the discussion of Thomas Aquinas. This ontological continuity is essential for Thomistic ethics.

[3] Georg Wünsch, Theologische Ethik (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1925).

[4] Albert C. Knudson, The Principles of Christian Ethics (New York: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1943).

In 1925 Wünsch wrote:

> As everything has the origin of its being in God and no creature can disown the creator, there is no opposition in kind between natural, i.e., this worldly, immanent morality as directed by naturalistic and human criteria, and, on the other hand, Christian morality as determined by the living God.[1]

In 1943 in a somewhat similar manner Albert Cornelius Knudson wrote:

> The relation of Christian to philosophical ethics is essentially the same as that of theology to the philosophy of religion. . . . They both employ the same method. . . . The philosophy of religion has to do with religion in general, while theology approaches the subject from the standpoint of the church. . . . Practically the same also to be said of Christian or theological ethics. In its method of validation it does not differ from philosophical ethics. But it emphasizes, as the latter does not, the ethical teaching of Scripture and of the Christian church.[2]

Bonhoeffer accused this type of theological ethics typically characteristic of "Neo-Protestantism" as being too abstract. Following a line of thought characteristic of the early Bonhoeffer, he rejected this type of ethic precisely because it avoided the issue of "concretion."

> What can and must be said is not what is good once and for all, but the way in which Christ takes form among us here and now. The attempt to define that which is good once and for all has in the nature of the case, always ended in failure.[3]

To Bonhoeffer's mind such an approach could really say nothing to the world. The general principles which such an ethic enunciated were so vague and general that they failed to speak to concrete man, or else so much was collated from "a whole immense range of conceivable contents" that an unmanageable casuistic system was the result. There is an even more serious problem with this approach. This particular approach to ethics sets out from the conflict between the "good and the real," i.e., from the ideal and the world. To divide the "good and the real" in such fashion can issue only in a "formalism" or a "casuistry." Neither result is consonant with what Bonhoeffer conceives to be the authentic Christian ethic. A *bona fide* Christian ethics asks precisely this question. How does Christ take form among us here and now? The attempts of Thomistic ethics and Neo-Protestant ethics result in a fleeing from the real for the sake of the ideal. There is no concrete formation of Christ in the here and now.[1]

---

[1] Georg Wünsch, Theologische Ethik, as quoted in Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. II, Sec. 2, trans. G. M. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1957), 534f.

[2] Knudson, ibid., p. 33.

[3] Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 23.

A similar fleeing from the real or the world takes place in what Bonhoeffer calls the "pseudo-Lutheran" ethic of the two realms.[2] This approach begins with the postulation of two spheres or realms and then procedes to explore what the relations are between the two. In many respects this division between the two realms has affinity with the Scholastic ethic of the Middle Ages.

---

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 17-25. With Bonhoeffer's rejection of the Thomistic and Neo-Protestant ethics it seems strange to hear the Anglo-Catholic Martin Jarret-Kerr joining natural law theory of a Neo-Thomistic variety with Bonhoeffer's appeal for "religionless Christianity." See Martin Jarret-Kerr, *The Secular Promise* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), p. 205: "When Bonhoeffer foretold the advent of a 'religionless Christianity', and spoke of 'man come of age', and the rest, he perhaps little realized the storm of debate, of accusation and defence, of alarm and acclaim which would result. But among those who have all along believed in and taught a 'natural law' there need have been far less anxiety and fevered discussion: of course God does not leave himself without witness outside the arena of grace and salvation; of course there is a presence *extra ecclesiam*; of course St. Paul's teaching in Romans about the *law written in* men's hearts is relevant to all that Bonhoeffer said."

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 62f.

> This view becomes dominant for the first time in the Middle Ages, and for the second time in the pseudo-Protestant thought of the period after the Reformation. Reality as a whole now falls into two parts, and the concern of ethics is with the proper relation of these two parts to each other. In the scholastic scheme of things the realm of the natural is made subordinate to the realm of grace; in the pseudo-Lutheran scheme the autonomy of the orders of this world is proclaimed in opposition to the law of Christ, and in the scheme of the Enthusiasts the congregation of the Elect takes up the struggle with a hostile world for the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.[1]

While Luther cannot be credited, claims Bonhoeffer, with this radical distinction between the two spheres in which the religious sphere has nothing to say to the secular sphere, many Lutherans of later time have drawn this conclusion and made it a tenet of their ethical systems.[2] The fallacy with this position, Bonhoeffer holds, is basically the same as the fallacy with the Thomistic and Neo-Protestant position. Both positions in their division of the secular or natural and the spiritual or religious are predicated upon a fallacious Christological interpretation. Christ is the Lord of the world as well as the church. Indeed, the reality (Wirklichkeit) of the world depends on the act of God in Christ.

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 62-63.

[2] Among later Lutherans who committed this "Lutheran fallacy" Bonhoeffer cites F. Naumann and Ernst Troeltsch. See Bonhoeffer, ibid., pp. 287-288. See also chapter II of this dissertation for similar treatments of Luther.

> Just as in Christ the reality of God entered into the reality of the world, so, too, is that which is Christian to be found only in that which is of the world, the "supernatural" only in the natural, the holy only in the profane, and the revelational only in the rational. The unity of the reality of God and of the world, which has been accomplished in Christ, is repeated, or, more exactly, is realized, ever afresh in the life of men.[1]

This is not to identify the natural with the revelational nor the world with God. Bonhoeffer is most cautious at this point:

> And yet what is Christian is not identical with what is of the world. The natural is not identical with the supernatural or the revelational with the rational. But between the two there is in each case a unity which derives solely from the reality (*Wirklichkeit*) of Christ, that is to say solely from faith in this ultimate reality.[2]

While Bonhoeffer did not use the term, there is in this "pseudo-Lutheran" type of Christian ethics an implicit Christological docetism. Christ is relevant for man's "personality"[3] or man's "soul,"[4] but the Gospel has nothing to say of man in relation to his world. Rather than the term docetism, Bonhoeffer employs the criticism of "idealism," and he rightly understands that any ethical position which views the world of things as the arena of adiaphora is a blatant antinomianism.[1]

---

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 65.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Otto Dilschneider, *Die evangelische Tat* (Tütersloh: Verlagshaus, 1940), p. 87, speaks of Christ's exclusive relevance for man's "personality." Bonhoeffer strongly objects to such a division between nature and spirit. See Bonhoeffer, *ibid.*, pp. 291-292.
[4] Karl Heim, *Die christlich Ethik* (Tübingen: Katzmann-Verlag, 1955), pp. 138-160, speaks in a somewhat similar manner to Dilschneider in discussing *adiaphora*. While Bonhoeffer was not able to hear Heim's lectures on Christian ethics nor read them in print, Bonhoeffer had already before his untimely death sensed that Heim's apologetics was directed for the salvation of man's "heart." See Bonhoeffer, *Prisoner for God*, pp. 197-199: "Heim sought, along pietist and methodist lines, to convince individual man that he was faced with the alternative 'either despair or Jesus.' He gained 'hearts'."

> So long as Christ and the world are conceived spatially as areas adjacent to each other and repelling each other man will be left in the following dilemma: he abandons reality as a whole, and places himself in one or the other of the two spaces. He seeks Christ without the world, or he seeks the world without Christ. In either case he is deceiving himself. Or else he tries to stand in both spaces at once and thereby becomes the man of eternal conflict, the kind of man who emerged in the period after the Reformation and who has repeatedly set himself up as representing the only form of Christian existence which is in accord with reality.[2]

Another possible approach to Christian ethics is that particularly unique approach which Karl Barth developed in the twentieth century. In many respects this approach would strike the student of theology as having definite affinities with Bonhoeffer's own position. Indeed there have been those who have interpreted Bonhoeffer's ethics as a development from Barth's own unique position.[3] Barth's approach was to insist that theological ethics be grounded in the act of God and not in the acts of man. To ground ethics in this form is, for

---

1. See Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 292: "The alleged immunity of the world of things from the commandment of God rests on a false interpretation of the doctrine of adiaphora. The fact that adiaphora exist does not at all mean that the world of things is neutralized: it means, on the contrary, that it is appointed by God to serve the liberty of men. Nothing is in principle an adiaphoron; the assertion that a thing is an adiaphoron is only a statement of belief and it does not imply at all that a certain quality is possessed by the 'thing in itself' independently of the person, but rather expresses a particular relationship of the person to the thing. A doctrine which states that things may in principle be adiaphora is antinomistic."
2. Bonhoeffer, ibid., p. 65.
3. For example, Jürgen Moltmann, Herrschaft Christi und soziale Wirklichkeit nach Dietrich Bonhoeffer (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1959).

Barth, to insist on a Christological basis for ethical action. Barth refuses to use the term "ethics" in some abstract and neutral sense, but "ethics" must be concretely grounded in the specific object to which it is applied. The object of Christian theology is the Word of God as this Word is addressed to man in Jesus Christ.[1] Therefore, Jesus Christ is the Word of God, i.e., the incarnate electing God and the elected man.[2] This is the very key to a right understanding of Christian ethics. Theological ethics represents the insight that "what is good" has been said to man in and through the work and revelation of Jesus Christ. To put this into Barth's predestinational language, "what is good" has been decided once and for all in God's eternal decree before time when God, electing man for fellowship with Himself, claimed man for Himself and thereby made Himself responsible for man's sanctification.[3]

The Christological phrasing of this decision of God is to be seen in that the justification, sanctification and vocation of sinful man was accomplished in Jesus Christ through the Cross and Resurrection.[4] The Cross, viewed from the standpoint of the resurrection, reveals to man God's Yes to what is good in His creation and His No to the forces

---

1. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV, 3, trans. G. M. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. and T. clark, 1958), pp. 660f. Hereafter the citations from the Church Dogmatics will be given without publisher and publication dates. Such information may be found in the bibliography.
2. Barth, God, Grace and Gospel, trans. J. Strathern McNab, Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No. 8 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., 1959), p. 8. See also, Barth, Gifford Lectures, The Knowledge of God and the Service of God, trans. J. L. M. Haire and I. Henderson (Naperville, Illinois: Alec Allenson, 1955), pp. 127, 141ff.; Church Dogmatics, I, 2, 367ff.; II, 2, 509, 517ff., 538ff.; III, 4, 41ff.
3. Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV, 3, 415f.
4. Barth, Church Dogmatics, II, 2, 535ff.

of evil opposing His good creation, including man's sin. Theological ethics can be concerned only with explicating the divine election of man. This means that there is no room for any independent inquiry into the question of good and evil. Any such attempt would be an overstepping of man and a usurpation of God's prerogative. On this basis Barth is in opposition to any form of Thomistic or philosophical natural law theory as a part of theological ethics.[1]

On this basis Barth performs one of the most unique and daring feats in Christian theology, i.e., he inverts the time-honored Law-Gospel relationship. The Gospel precedes the Law, and the Law is the form of the Gospel. This is logically necessary in Barth's thought since God's eternal Yes to man is spoken in and through Jesus Christ, whereby God takes upon Himself man's sin and foreordains man's ultimate salvation in Jesus Christ. It is this action which stands at the very outset of Barth's theological concern. It is, therefore, Gospel before Law.[2]

The covenant established in this act of God's grace in Jesus Christ is the context within which the relationship between God and man takes place.[3] This means that God's salvation of man has taken place objectively, and man must, therefore, make his own self-determining response to his divine predetermination in Jesus Christ. In this sense man obeys God's law as he responds to God's Gospel.[1] Therefore, says Barth:

---

[1] Barth, Church Dogmatics, II, 2, 522ff., 535ff.; see also Barth, Karl Barth's Table Talk, recorded and edited by John Godsey, Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No. 10 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1963), p. 7.

[2] Barth, God, Grace and Gospel, pp. 4, 10, 12, 13; Church Dogmatics, II, 2, 509ff.

[3] Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV, 1, 46ff.; IV, 2, 33.

> The goodness of human action consists in the goodness with which God acts toward man. But God deals with man through His Word. . . . Therefore man does good in so far as he hears the Word of God and acts as a hearer of this Word.[2]

Bonhoeffer does not respond to Barth at these specific points,[3] but from Bonhoeffer's exposition of the concepts of the "ultimate" and the "penultimate" certain critical responses to this type of theological ethics are obvious. By joining Bonhoeffer and Barth at this point clearer understanding of Bonhoeffer's concepts can be seen and the distinctions between the two can become all the more evident. By Bonhoeffer's identification of the "ultimate" with justification by grace through faith and the "penultimate" as the world wherein this word of justification reaches man a critical juncture with Barth is reached. Bonhoeffer would be at this point suspicious of Barth's inversion of the Law/Gospel relationship since this inversion to Gospel/Law would take place exclusively in what Bonhoeffer calls the "ultimate."[4] This means in Barth's system that man is quickly swept up into the eschatological or the "ultimate," and a serious degrading of the "penultimate" is the result. It was Bonhoeffer's conviction

---

1. Barth, Church Dogmatics, II, 2, 510.
2. Barth, Church Dogmatics, II, 2, 546.
3. Bonhoeffer could hardly have responded to these suggestions of Barth since in their fullest form they did not come until after his martyrdom.
4. It is quite possible that Bonhoeffer makes an inversion also, but that conclusion can only be reached after a fuller delineation of "ultimate" and the "penultimate."

that this form of radical solution means "the complete breaking off of the penultimate."[1]

> Ultimate and penultimate are here mutually exclusive contraries. Christ is the destroyer and enemy of everything penultimate, and everything penultimate is enmity towards Christ. . . . There are no distinctions. Everything must go to the judgment. There are only two categories: for Christ, and against Him. . . . Everything penultimate in human behaviour is sin and denial. In the face of the approaching end there is for the Christian only the last word and his last conduct.[2]

In other words, Barth has too hastily brought the "ultimate" by inverting the Law/Gospel relationship, and has thereby destroyed the possibility for the relative autonomy of the "penultimate," or possibly he does not take the "penultimate" with sufficient seriousness.

Another approach to Christian ethics known to Bonhoeffer would be the ethics of existentialist theology. In many respects the theological adaptation of existentialist thought parallels the radical Law/Gospel dichotomy of late Lutheranism when these insights are brought particularly to the field of theological ethics. The attempt is made in existentialist theology to perform an analysis of the human situation which will then open man up for the Gospel. Man is to be brought to a sense of his fate, his inability to make meaning from life, his guilt, his despair. In short, man is to be convicted of his human predicament. On the German scene theological thought bearing considerable existentialist emphasis in this respect can be seen in theologians such as

---

[1] Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 85.
[2] Ibid., pp. 85-86.

Karl Heim and Helmut Thielicke.[1] The attempt on the part of both of these men is to unmask man so that he stands exhausted and disillusioned with this world, and only then can he hear the proclamation of the Gospel.

The danger in this manner of theologizing is that the existential analysis is viewed as a prerequisite and necessary preparation for the Gospel. This two-fold theological *schema* carries implicitly a two-fold theological error which Bonhoeffer finds repugnant. First, man must be reduced to weakness in order to respond to the Gospel.[2] Bonhoeffer became quite indignant at this suggestion when in his last papers he wrote: "When Jesus blessed sinners, they were real sinners, but Jesus did not make every man a sinner first. He called them out of their sin not into their sin."[3] Second, this particular *schema* is predicated upon a distinction between man's inner and his outer life, and there is no biblical justification for such a division. "The 'heart' in the biblical sense is not the inward life, but the whole man in relation to God."[1] This kind of "inwardness" is an actual denial of the natural and has no place in Christian theology! Bonhoeffer refers to this as a "revolt of inferiority."[2] As he sees evidence of this method at work empirically he categorizes it within the church as "clerical subterfuge"[3] and outside the church among existentialist philosophers and psychotherapists as attempts to be "precursors of God."[4] In this respect, existentialism is a "secularized methodism!"[5]

---

[1] See Heim, *Die christliche Ethik* and his popular treatment of the Sermon on the Mount, *Die Bergpredigt Jesu* (Stuttgart: Furche-Verlag, 1959). For reference to Thielicke see his *Theologische Ethik*, I and II (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1955, 1958), *Nihilism: Its Origin and Nature - with a Christian Answer*, trans. J. W. Doberstein (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), and his preaching on the Sermon on the Mount, *Das Leben kann noch einmal beginnen* (Hamburg: Quell-Verlag, 1959). Both men make strong appeal to the Lutheran aphorism of "Godly despair." In this sense the existentialist analysis is the equivalent to the preaching of the law to convict man, in order that he might respond to the Gospel. This Kierkegaardian prerequisite of *angst* is always prior to the discovery of "true meaning." George Forell, *op. cit.*, chose to analyze Bonhoeffer against a Tillichian background in considering this type of ethics. It would seem more appropriate to employ Heim and Thielicke since they are both part of the German Lutheran scene, and in particular, since Bonhoeffer in his early student days had studied under Heim.

[2] For an analysis and critique of Thielicke's homilectical and theological method at this point see James C. Logan, "Helmut Thielicke: Preacher in a Nihilistic Age," *Nexus*, VI, No. 3 (May 1963), pp. 21-25.

[3] Bonhoeffer, *Prisoner for God*, p. 156.

In the Ethics Bonhoeffer was more restrained and theologically more to the point in underscoring the mistake of this position. The real question which must be raised to this position is: Is the problem-answer correlation, i.e., the existential situation-the theological answer, a biblical method? Likewise, a more practically oriented question must also be raised: Is such a method to be employed in the modern world without extreme detriment? To the latter question, Bonhoeffer will devote much time in the prison papers in discussing the outmoded *deus ex machina* conception of the action of God. In the

---

1. *Ibid.*, p. 214.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 212.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 213.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
5. *Ibid.* It is interesting to note that a modern writer joins Bonhoeffer in this objection to existentialist theology by calling it a "sophisticated revivalism." See Harvey Cox, "The Place and Purpose of Theology," *Christian Century*, LXXXIII, No. 1 (January 5, 1966), p. 8.

Ethics he addresses himself explicitly to the first question:

> It is necessary to free oneself from the way of thinking which sets out from human problems and which asks for solutions on this basis. Such thinking is unbiblical. The way of Jesus Christ, and therefore the way of all Christian thinking, leads not from the world to God but from God to the world. This means that the essence of the gospel does not lie in the solution of human problems, and that the solution of human problems cannot be the essential task of the Church. Of course, it does not follow from this that the Church has no tasks at all in this connexion. We can perceive what is her legitimate task only when we have found the right point of departure.[1]

If justification is the "ultimate" and man's life in the world the "penultimate," a distinction then must be maintained between the two, and the relationship between the two is not one in which the "penultimate" is a logical, progressive preparation for the "ultimate." Indeed, it is only in the context of the "ultimate" that the "penultimate" has its validation and relative autonomy. While, indeed, there is a proper relationship between the two, the two-stage or two-sphere relationships expressed in Thomistic and Neo-Protestant theological ethics, in the "pseudo-Lutheran" idea, and in contemporary existentialist theology are mistaken to say the least, and they encourage a confusion of the two in that ultimately the world is denied for the sake of the "ultimate." The "ultimate" makes no such mandate, but in the revelation in Jesus Christ it meets and validates the "penultimate."

---

[1] Ibid., p. 320. Bonhoeffer underscores this point in Prisoner for God, p. 143, and it might be a wise hermeneutical procedure to interpret the latter within the context of the former: "We must not wait until we are at the end of our tether: he must be found at the centre of life: in life, and not only in death; in health and vigour, and not only in suffering; in activity, and not only in sin. The ground for this lies in the revelation of God in Christ. Christ is the centre of life, and in no sense did he come to answer our unsolved problems."

4. A Final Definition of the Natural

This *excursus* into Bonhoeffer's critique of various approaches to theological ethics should clarify, if obliquely, the concepts of the "ultimate" and the "penultimate." What, then, does Bonhoeffer understand as the "natural"? Bonhoeffer has steered his course away from the pitfalls of identifying the "natural" with human sin. To the contrary, the "natural" is "that which, after the Fall, is directed toward the coming of Christ."[1] It is correct to say that through the Fall the creature becomes "nature," but this means that the creature finds through the Fall the relative autonomy of the natural life. This autonomy or freedom can be utilized in one of two directions: it can be directed toward the coming of Christ, or it can be directed toward closing "the doors against the coming of Christ." The former is the "natural," and the latter is the "unnatural."

It is necessary, then, to distinguish between the "form" and the "content" of the natural. Formally speaking, the natural is that which God preserves so that it may be directed toward the "ultimate," i.e., justification. The "content" of the natural is the life actually preserved, and it is this life which is common to all men. The "form" of the natural can only be known within the context of faith, i.e., in relationship to Jesus Christ. The "content" of the natural is open to perception by man's reason. Reason is therefore not what some have called the "spark of the divine," but it is the equipment of the natural which safeguards the natural against the unnatural.[1]

---

[1] Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, p. 102. In 1932-33 Bonhoeffer had already drawn attention to the double character of man's autonomy achieved through the Fall. See Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall*, trans. John C. Fletcher (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1959), pp. 65-69, 73-78.

It follows that there is a difference in perspective upon the natural as "form" and as "content," and this affects the understanding of the "end" and "means" of life.

> In relation to Jesus Christ the status of life as an end in itself is understood as creaturehood, and its status as a means to an end is understood as participation in the kingdom of God; while, within the framework of the natural life, the fact that life is an end in itself finds expression in the rights with which life is endowed, and the fact that life is a means to an end finds expression in the duties which are imposed on it. Thus, for the sake of Christ and His coming, natural life must be lived within the framework of certain definite rights and certain definite duties. To repudiate or annul or destroy these rights and duties is to place a serious obstacle in the way of the coming of Christ and to strike at the roots of the gratitude which reverently preserves the life that has been received and which at the same time commits this life to the service of the Creator.[2]

These natural rights Bonhoeffer sees as both bodily and mental and discusses them under the headings of suicide, reproduction, and nascent life, and the freedom of bodily life.[3] These natural rights must then be allowed to have their relative autonomy. While the "penultimate" logically precedes the "ultimate" and the "ultimate" theologically takes precedence over the "penultimate," there is still allowed in Bonhoeffer the latitude for the natural to be the natural.

---

[1] Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 102.
[2] Ibid., pp. 107-108.
[3] Ibid., pp. 122-140.

> The life of the body, like life in general, is both a means to an end and an end in itself. To regard the body exclusively as a means to an end is idealistic but not Christian; for a means is discarded as soon as the end is achieved. It is from this point of view that the body is conceived as the prison from which the immortal soul is released forever by death. According to the Christian doctrine, the body possesses a higher dignity. Man is a bodily being, and remains so in eternity as well. . . . It is in the joys of the body that it becomes apparent that the body is an end in itself within the natural life. If the body were only a means to an end man would have no right to bodily joys. . . . This would have very far-reaching consequences for the Christian appraisal of all the problems that have to do with the life of the body, housing, food, clothing, recreation, play and sex. . . . Within the natural life the joys of the body are reminders of the eternal joy which has been promised to men by God.[1]

Of course, for Bonhoeffer this affirmation of the relative autonomy of the natural can be made only from the standpoint of Jesus Christ. To affirm it otherwise is to deify life itself. In the light of the "ultimate" there must be both a Yes and No to the "penultimate." It is only in the context of this Yes and No that one can recognize Christ as his true life. God's affirmation of the natural in Christ is

> . . . the Yes to what is created, to becoming and to growth, to the flower and to the fruit, to health, happiness, ability, achievement, worth, success, greatness and honour; in short, it is the Yes to the development of the power of life. And it is the No to that defection from the origin, the essence and the goal of life which is inherent in all this existence from the outset.[2]

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 112-113.
[2] Ibid., p. 190.

When the concept of the natural is understood in this manner, one has opened the door to an understanding of Bonhoeffer's Christian ethics as an "ethics of formation." Proleptically the natural is grounded in the *Kondeszens*-Christology of the Incarnation. The fact of the Incarnation gives man the right and duty to be man. Conformation to the *Incarnate Christ* is to be the real man.

> It is man's right and duty that he should be man. The quest for the superman, the endeavor to outgrow the man within the man, the pursuit of the heroic, the cult of the demigod, all this is not the proper concern of man, for it is untrue. The real man is not an object either for contempt or for deification, but an object of the love of God. The rich and manifold variety of God's creation suffers no violence here from false uniformity or from the forcing of man into the pattern of an ideal or a type or a definite picture of the human character. The real man is at liberty to be his Creator's creature. To be conformed with the Incarnate is to have the right to be the man one really is.[1]

Conformation to the *Crucified Christ* -- "this means being a man sentenced by God."[2] Man bears on his life the scars of sin, and he cannot therefore place himself above any other man. There is a sense in which he is bound with all men in bonds of sin. Man must therefore die daily to sin.

> He bears all the suffering imposed on him, in the knowledge that it serves to enable him to die with his own will and to accept God's judgment upon him. But in surrendering himself to God's judgment upon him and against him he is himself just in the eyes of God.[3]

---

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[3] *Ibid.*

Conformation to the *Risen Christ* -- "that is to be a new man before God."[1]

> In the midst of death he is in life. In the midst of sin he is righteous. In the midst of the old he is new.[2]

Bonhoeffer is most cautious at this point. In essence his is a *theologia crucis*, not a *theologia gloria*. The glory of the new life is hidden in the realm of the "penultimate." Man lives in the world like any other man. Even though he may be transfigured through Christ into the new man, he still carries the sign of the cross and the judgment. It is only by bearing this willingly that he really shows himself to be "in Christ." At this point, an old theme of Bonhoeffer appears again. "The Church is the new man in Christ, incarnate, sentenced and awakened to new life."[3] In this sense what is significant is that the new man in Christ and therefore the Church as "that section of humanity in which Christ has really taken form"[4] has nothing to do with religion, but the man in Christ is he who has heard both God's Yes to the goodness of the natural and His No to the unnatural and is therefore "the whole man in his existence in the world with all its implications."[5] As Bonhoeffer had earlier begun his theological task with the question of the concreteness of revelation, here in the *Ethics* he answers the ethical problem by pointing to the realization (*Wirklichwerden*) of this revelation within the "penultimate," i.e., among God's creatures. It is in this sense that the "ultimate" and the "penultimate" are met, and it is in this sense that Bonhoeffer recovers the integrity and validity of the secular, worldly, natural life of man.

---

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*

> . . . the problem of Christian ethics is the realization (*Wirklichwerden*) among God's creatures of the revelational reality (*Offenbarungswirklichkeit*) of God in Christ, just as the problem of dogmatics is the truth of the revelational reality of God in Christ.[1]

Since R. A. Markus' judgment may be correct that what "is implicit in the *Ethics* is displayed in his (Bonhoeffer's) *Prisoner for God*,"[2] an examination of these fragments to determine Bonhoeffer's final opinions on the "secular" will follow.

C. The "Secular" in the Prison Papers

One cannot examine Bonhoeffer's theology without giving some account of the life of the theologian as well. His theology merges with his life. On April 5, 1943, Bonhoeffer was imprisoned after two attempts had been made on the life of Hitler during the preceding March. This was a stalemate imprisonment period since no conclusive evidence could be gained by the Gestapo until the failure on Hitler's life of July 20, 1944. On April 5, 1945, after having nearly escaped reality of a death sentence, Bonhoeffer was listed for execution. Heretofore,

---

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

[2] R. A. Markus, "A Relevant Pattern of Holiness," *The Hibbert Journal*, LV, No. 219 (July 1957), 392.

Bonhoeffer's charge had been that he had received an illegal reservation from military service. The trial on the charge of treason was conducted on April 9, and on April 10, 1945, he was hanged. It was during this prison period that the theological fragments which have caused such ferment in the Christian world were composed. Even Bonhoeffer felt something of the strange power of his more radical thinking which he felt would have caused "Lutherans (so-called!) and pietists" to "get the creeps."[1]

Several concrete circumstances during this period helped to mold his thinking and to point it further in the direction already charted in the _Ethics_. Increasingly Bonhoeffer had become disenchanted with conditions in the Confessing Church. His judgment on the Confessing Church was cryptically expressed:

> The Confessing Church and the theology of revelation. A δος μοι ποῦ στῶ over against the world, involving a "factual" interest in Christianity. . . . The overall achievement of the Confessing Church: championing ecclesiastical interests, but little personal faith in Jesus Christ. "Jesus" disappearing from sight. Sociologically, no effect on the masses -- interest confined to the upper and lower middle classes. Incubus of traditional vocabulary, difficult to understand. The decisive factor: the Church on the defensive. Unwillingness to take risks in the service of humanity.[2]

It is perhaps a truism, but still a necessary one to repeat in the light of many contemporary commentaries on Bonhoeffer's critique of the church, but much of what Bonhoeffer says during this period

---

1. Bonhoeffer, _Prisoner for God_, p. 79.
2. _Ibid_., p. 178.

concerning the church must be viewed in this exact historical context.[1]

Another influential factor was the opportunity which the prison period afforded Bonhoeffer to discover the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in literature and philosophy. Repeatedly the names of Gotthelf, Stifter, Immermann, Fontane, Keller and others of more theological and philosophical repute appear in his letters.[2] At one point Bonhoeffer confesses: "My real ambition was to become as thoroughly acquainted as possible with the nineteenth century in Germany."[3] In this interest in the literary productivity of the past one can see evidences of Bonhoeffer's growing appreciation of man's cultural achievements and his own concern to see the nineteenth century spirit and theological task through to a point of having been overcome in a profounder sense than Barth had been able to achieve.

---

[1] Such a perspective would correct the tendency to evade the doctrine of the church in American appropriations of Bonhoeffer's prison thoughts. See, for example, William Hamilton, *The New Essence of Christianity* (New York: Association Press, 1961), p. 106, where he speaks of Bonhoeffer's "anti-ecclesiastical approach to Christ's lordship." Hamilton even ventures the suggestion that theology might do without a special doctrine of the church! Bonhoeffer's prison correspondence will hardly support such "de-ecclesiologizing." A strong statement regarding the necessity of the doctrine of the church for the entire Bonhoeffer *corpus* is to be found in Chr. von Hase, "Begriff und Wirklichkeit der Kirche in der Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffer," *Die mündige Welt*, I (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1959), 26-45.

[2] Bonhoeffer, *Prisoner for God*, p. 45.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

> I feel myself obliged to tackle these questions as one who, though a "modern" theologian, is still aware of the debt we owe to liberal theology. There will not be many of the younger men who combine both trends in themselves.[1]

At an earlier time he had written more specifically:

> Not until that is achieved (i.e., the non-religious interpretation) will, in my opinion, liberal theology be overcome (and even Barth is still dominated by it, though negatively), and at the same time the question it raises be genuinely taken up and answered (which is not the case in the revelational positivism maintained by the Confessing Church!).[2]

The prison experience brought to Bonhoeffer also a deepened sense of identity with humanity both Christian and, particularly, non-Christian. For Bonhoeffer, in prison or out of prison, only the common life in which all experiences, bitter or sweet, are shared is the Christian life. To this latter group Bonhoeffer found himself compellingly drawn.

> I often ask myself why a Christian instinct draws me more to the religionless than to the religious, by which I mean not with any intention of evangelizing them, but rather, I might almost say, in "brotherhood."[3]

This experience of solidarity with unbelievers was an essential aspect of what Bonhoeffer had earlier referred to as the reality of the "penultimate." The result of this conviction is that the highest expression of Christian man is to suffer with God in the world.

---

[1] Ibid., p. 177.
[2] Ibid., p. 149.
[3] Ibid., pp. 123-124.

Participating in the "suffering of God" by sharing with others, one escapes false obligations and discovers that being a Christian means having a part in the life of the world. Bonhoeffer ably expresses this experience and theological conviction when on July 8, 1944, he wrote the four-stanza poem, "Christians and Unbelievers."[1]

On the anvil of this kind of prison experience and with the hammer of his previous theological explorations Bonhoeffer assayed what is not fundamentally an unusual task, the attempt to offer twentieth century Christians a perspective by which to understand what was happening in their world,[2] but he achieved his goal in what is, albeit fragmentary, a vital and probing way. He attempts to meet this task in a way which others before had not explored as daringly and as fully, i.e., he attempts this task from a Christological basis. It is not only helpful but essential to bear this in mind as the themes of the later period are studied.[3] The Christological question is not set forth in the prison papers as Bonhoeffer had earlier set it forth in the Berlin lectures of 1933. The Tegel prison was hardly a place suitable for a university lecture! A study of the implied Christology of this later period would indicate no major deviations from the *Kondeszens*-Christology of the earlier period. What does stand out in sharp relief is that during the later period Bonhoeffer is much more concerned about the *personal* nature of faith in Jesus Christ.[1] At one point he writes:

---

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168.

[2] This was actually the intention of Augustine in writing *The City of God*. See chapter II of this dissertation.

[3] Such popular treatments as J. A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (London: S. C. M. Press, Ltd., 1963), tend to miss this point and thereby lapse into an ethical Jesusolatry. Serious questions must be put to the thesis of a more scholarly and serious treatment, Erich Müller-Gangloff, "Theologie für die mündige Welt," *Die neue Furche*, Jahrgang 6, Heft 8 (August 1952), p. 530, where the statement is made that Bonhoeffer sets himself resolutely in opposition to Barth by emphatically choosing to think from the standpoint of man.

> If the earth was good enough to bear the Man Jesus Christ, if a man like Jesus really lived in it, then, and only then, has life a meaning for us. If Jesus had not lived, then our life, in spite of all the other people we know and honour and love, would be without meaning.[2]

Bonhoeffer rejected all substantialistic categories (which are abstract) in dealing with the question of God, as he had previously done in framing an adequate Christology in 1933. Life in the world is concrete and the answer to the question of God must have an equally concrete beginning, i.e., Jesus Christ.

> What do we mean by "God"? Not in the first place an abstract belief in his omnipotence, etc. That is not a genuine experience of God, but a partial extension of the world. Encounter with Jesus Christ, implying a complete orientation of human being in the experience of Jesus as one whose only concern is for others. This concern of Jesus for others is the experience of transcendence. This freedom from self maintained to the point of death, the sole ground of his omnipotence, omniscience and ubiquity. Faith is participation in this Being of Jesus (incarnation, cross and resurrection). Our relation to God is not a religious relationship to a supreme Being, absolute in power and goodness, which is a spurious conception of transcendence, but a new life for others, through participation in the Being of God.[3]

---

[1] Gerhard Ebeling, "Die nicht-religiöse Interpretation biblischer Begriffe," *Die mündige Welt*, II, ed. E. Bethge (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1956), p. 20: ". . . es ist doch aber andererseits unbegreiflich, wie dabei übersehen werden konnte, dass sich in den Briefen auch keine Spur eines Irrewerdens an Jesus Christus entdecken lässt, dass es Bonhoeffer vielmehr in immer elementarer Weise um den persönlichen Christusglauben geht und dass seiner Meinung nach das allerdings so problematisch gewordene Reden von Gott allein von Jesus Christus her seine rechte Begründung erfahren kann."

[2] Bonhoeffer, *Prisoner for God*, p. 184.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 179.

The themes which follow are but the implications of this kind of Christological approach as an attempt to understand and interpret what is happening in the world. The attempt to interpret the world is not new, but what is new is the stance and subsequent implications of such a Christological starting-point. What is new is the proclamation of a "world come of age," the call for a "religionless Christianity" and with this the beginning of a program of "nonreligious interpretation of biblical concepts," and the demand for a "holy worldliness" -- all this in the name of a Christology, all of this for the sake of Jesus Christ. To these themes attention is now turned.[1]

1. „Die mündige Welt"[2]

By the term "mündige Welt" Bonhoeffer is referring to the fruition of a process begun approximately eight centuries ago wherein man began an autonomous quest for the laws which govern science, social and political affairs, art, ethics, and religion.[3] The real significance of this movement is that man deals with these questions without appealing to the "God hypothesis." Bonhoeffer undertakes a particular reading of the historical movements and intellectual currents to substantiate this process of man's achievement of autonomy. At one place he locates the beginning of this movement toward autonomy in the thirteenth century:

---

[1] The themes as outlined and treated below are arranged in a systematic order rather than a chronological order as they are encountered in a general way in Bonhoeffer's papers. Chronologically, the themes might best be ordered accordingly: Worldliness, Nonreligious Interpretation, and finally World Come of Age. The systematic reordering is to show the interconnection of themes and their theological cohesiveness.

[2] See Oscar Hammelsbeck, "Zu Bonhoeffers Gedanken über die mündig gewordene Welt," *Die mündige Welt*, I, I, 46-61, for the fullest and most adequate exploration of this theme.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

> The movement beginning about the thirteenth century. . . towards the autonomy of man . . . has in our time reached a certain completion. Man has learned to cope with all questions of importance without recourse to God as a working hypothesis.[1]

At another point he places the theological locus of this with Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648) who produced in 1624 his major work, _De veritate prout distinguitur a revelatione, a verisimile, a possibile et a falso_, which claimed reason to be sufficient for the gaining of all religious knowledge. The attempt to replace general moral principles for the Decalogue by Montaigne and Bodin marks the same trend in ethics. Machiavelli, who freed politics from the tutelage of morality, and Grotius, who formulates international law as the law of nature, are the chief figures in the political arena. In philosophy the figures of Descartes, who views the world mechanistically and therefore functioning without the need of divine intervention; Spinoza, who identifies God with the world; Kant, who in deistic fashion separates God from the world; Fichte and Hegel, both of whom are pantheists, are the principal representatives of a progressive assertion of the autonomy of man and the world. In the natural sciences there stand Nicolas of Cusa and Giordano Bruno insisting on the infinity of space. What conclusion can be made with the mustering of these historical facts? Bonhoeffer concludes:

---

[1] _Ibid_.

> There is no longer any need for God as a working hypothesis, whether in morals, politics or science. Nor is there any need for such a God in religion of philosophy (Feuerbach). In the name of intellectual honesty these working hypotheses should be dropped or dispensed with as far as possible. A scientist or physician who seeks to provide edification is a hybrid.[1]

What has been the response of Christianity to this development of affairs? Has Christianity welcomed it and given it proper interpretation, or has Christianity sought to escape from the embarassment? Bonhoeffer suspects that the reaction has been both mixed and regrettable. Christianity has met this historical phenomenon with apologetics which has revealed Christianity's fear rather than expressed its faith.

> Christian apologetics has taken the most varying forms of opposition to this self-assurance. Efforts are made to prove to a world thus come of age that it cannot live without the tutelage of God.[2]
>
> It was the weak point of liberal theology that it allowed the world the right to assign Christ his place in that world: in the dispute between Christ and the world it accepted the comparatively clement peace dictated by the world. . . .[3]

Within German Lutheranism in the twentieth century Bonhoeffer sees three figures wrestling with this historical phenomenon.

---

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 218. An interesting comparison at this point can be made. This historical survey and analysis which Bonhoeffer completes is very similar to the historical survey which Karl Heim constructed (Heim's survey, however, was limited mostly to physical scientists and pushed further back to Democritus). What is significantly different is that Heim fought this historical tendency and called it "secularism." Bonhoeffer, on the other hand, welcomes the autonomy of man and proclaims the *mündige Welt*.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

> Heim sought, along pietist and methodist lines, to convince individual man that he was faced with the alternative "either despair or Jesus." He gained "hearts." Althaus, carrying forward the modern and positive line with a strong confessional emphasis, endeavoured to wring from the world a place for Lutheran teaching (ministry) and Lutheran worship, and otherwise left the world to its own devices. Tillich set out to interpret the evolution of the world itself -- against its will -- in a religious sense, to give it its whole shape through religion. That was very courageous of him, but the world unseated him and went on by itself; he, too, sought to understand the world better than it understood itself, but it felt entirely _mis_understood, and rejected the imputation.[1]

Apologetics is not the answer to the dilemma. Apologetics has been concerned with winning a place for God in the world or showing to the world that God has been there all the while. Neither is taking the world and its autonomy seriously. The approach of apologetics cannot allow the "penultimate" the relative autonomy which for the sake of the goodness of God's creation it deserves. Apologetics has the disadvantage of beginning at the wrong place. Either it attempts to begin with God and proceed to make Him relevant to the world, or it begins with the world and tries to understand it in a new way, i.e., in a "theonomous way." Neither approach has the merit of being genuinely faithful and Christian, i.e., beginning with Jesus Christ who took upon himself the weakness and temptation of the world.

> The attack by Christian apologetics upon the adulthood of the world I consider to be in the first place pointless, in the second ignoble, and in the third un-Christian.[2]

The result of the apologetic enterprise has been to seal "religion" into one compartment and the "world" or the "secular" into another compartment. It is no wonder that modern man, i.e., man come of age, is no longer a *homo religiosus*. If theology can no longer compartmentalize the "religious" and the "secular" and if theology faces honestly the phenomenon of a "world come of age," then theology must also face the fact that this historical process marks the "end of religion." Indeed, for the sake of Christ, theology must proclaim the "end of religion." The next question to be posed to Bonhoeffer is: What is meant by "the end of *religion*?"

---

[1] _Ibid._, pp. 147-148.
[2] _Ibid._, p. 147.

2. „Das Ende der christlichen Religion"

In response to a world which was progressively and increasingly learning to do without the "God hypothesis" theology attempted to secure a place for religion by claiming that the concept of God answered certain questions which the world on its own terms could not answer. Therefore, God was called upon to fill the "stop-gaps" of human knowledge. This is a last, frantic attempt to bring God in when man is "at the end of his tether."[1] Bonhoeffer sees the futility of this, for as man's knowledge of his world and his ability to deal with that knowledge creatively and constructively increase, God is pushed further and further to the periphery of life. This is all the more evidence of man's attempt to enclose his life with God and to separate it from the secular or worldly affairs. Until now men have simply been "using" God,[2] much as the ancients in their plays had used the *deus ex machina* (a device lowered onto the stage to rescue actors who otherwise would perish),[1] and so theology has unwittingly allowed itself to be enlisted in the ranks of those who edge God out of life. The remaining resort is to call upon Him only regarding such matters as guilt and death.

---

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 143.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

Even for these so-called "ultimate problems" solutions have been found which do not necessitate God as an answer. Bonhoeffer insisted that it simply was not true any longer to say that Christianity alone had the answers.[2] Worse yet, though some men keep God in reserve for moral emergencies, there are still those who have "no such difficulties."[3] In short, all such efforts are futile, practically speaking, and theologically speaking such efforts are attempts to create "religion" as a secure compartment within the world. This simply divides the world and religion and is an actual distortion of faith. In the name of faith, therefore, Bonhoeffer enters battle with "religion." It should be noted that this battle takes place for two related reasons: to continue the attempt to make a place for religion necessarily separates religion and the world, and from the standpoint of faith in Jesus Christ this attempt owes virtually nothing to the real meaning of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ in a worldly body, his coming into world history, his coming into the secular and taking upon himself the secular.

On the basis of Bonhoeffer's rejection of religion it would be an impossibility and a distortion of his thought to attempt a phenomenology of religion as an independent pursuit. The concept of religion cannot be isolated from the matrix of the related topics of Christ and the world come of age.[1] In attempting to give answer to the question -- "Who is Jesus Christ for us today?" -- Bonhoeffer sees that the phenomenon which he calls "religion which sets itself over against the modern world and over against Jesus Christ" is done. Indeed, religion as such is a hindrance and stumbling block to an encounter with Jesus Christ and with the modern world.

---

[1] Ibid.
[2] Ibid., p. 143.
[3] Ibid., p. 124.

It was Karl Barth who had in stronger terms than any other theologian, emphasized the uniqueness of faith as compared with the expressions of all other forms of human religion. For Barth the concern of the theologian is with nothing else than the Word of God which God himself gives as an act of grace to man. This creates the opportunity for faith, but man responds by attempting to take over this revelation with his religion which in turn distorts the reality of revelation. In this sense religion obstructs the true understanding of revelation, and conversely revelation is the end of religion. This applies to the religion of Judaism and Christianity as much as it applies to any other world religion.[2]

Barth sees this religious expression in the faith of Israel at such points as Israel's worship of the golden calf. This is not a story of pure idolatry, but rather it is an account of what happens when a people contrive to combine revelation with the methods of religion.[1] The vigorous protest of the prophets against Israel's cultus is to the same point. The religious life of Israel had turned into a tool whereby Israel tried to manipulate God to their own intentions.[2]

---

[1] See Bethge, "The Challenge of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life and Thought," p. 33.

[2] Barth, Church Dogmatics, II, 2, pp. 280-361.

Within the New Testament Barth sees the same religious stance as "unbelief" at work. The disciples were not chosen because of their religiosity. In fact it is their religion which causes them to quarrel over the place of honor in the kingdom. Paul's experiences with the early churches point to this same problem with religion. The religious passion which manifested itself in glossolalia threatened to isolate the participating Christians from Christ himself.[3]

Barth can then conclude that religion is a human endeavor. One cannot even speak of the Christian religion as being the true religion because it is, as Barth describes it, "the perfected form of human religion." This judgment on religion is not made from the Olympic heights of a higher religion. The true critique of religion, claims Barth, can be made only from the standpoint of revelation itself. Only on the basis of revelation has the theologian the right to this judgment.

This leads Barth to conclude that religion is the concern of the godless man, i.e., religion is a form, either of idolatry or of Werkgerechtigkeit (works-justification). It is the attempt of man to

---

1. Exodus 32:5f.
2. Jeremiah 10:1-16; Isaiah 44:9-20 are excellent examples of this protest.
3. See Barth's excursus in Church Dogmatics, I, 2, pp. 302-307.

secure himself within the fold of that which he can manage. It is on this basis that Barth rejects all forms of apologetics. Such a discipline is in reality a form of justification by works. The Christian man's stance is that of response to the revelational act, which alone can justify the sinner. In spite of the fact that a reformer such as Calvin found in man a "seed of religion," this is no justification for building one's theology on this basis. The reformers were well aware that an innate religiosity was the seed-bed of idolatry and unbelief. In the name of revelation the theologian must view religion as man's attempt to justify himself before God. Revelation is God's act of _justificatio impii_; it is the _demasque_ of all religion. It reveals, what Barth calls the _Nicht-Notwendigkeit der Religion_.[1] Barth's analysis revived and revised what was already implicit in the thought of the reformers.[2]

Bonhoeffer very clearly aligned himself with Barth in this massive attack upon the citadels of religion.

> Barth was the first to realize the mistake that all these efforts (which were all unintentionally sailing in the channel of liberal theology) were making in having as their objective the clearing of a space for religion in the world or against the world. He called the God of Jesus Christ into the lists against religion, "_pneuma_ against _sarx_." That was his greatest service.[3]

---

1. For a complete examination of the "non-religious" theme in historical perspective, see Otto Samuel, _Die religiösen und nichtreligiösen Offenbarungsbegriffe_ (Hamburg: Herbert Reich-Evangelischer Verlag, 1958).
2. Barth's critique of religion has been examined and expanded to meet the occasion of encounter with the world's religions in a thorough treatment in Hendrik Kraemer, _Religion and the Christian Faith_ (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956).
3. Bonhoeffer, _Prisoner for God_, pp. 147f.

Bonhoeffer, therefore, sees that the Incarnation destroyed once and for all the efficacy of religion. Various and sundry methods have been employed by apologetics to restore vitality to religion, which the world has resisted. Bonhoeffer commends this attack on religion which, if carried through, should result in the end of the old and the new metaphysics which attempt to encase faith in a containable system, the apologetic attempt to reduce the world to "childhood" again, the *Deus ex machina*, and above all, the religious *a priori* -- that cherished possession of nineteen centuries of theology.[1]

> Our whole nineteen-hundred-year-old Christian preaching and theology rests upon the "religious premise" of man. What we call Christianity has always been a pattern -- perhaps a true pattern -- of religion. But if one day it becomes apparent that this a priori "premise" simply does not exist, but was a historical and temporary form of human self-expression, i.e., if we really reach the stage of being radically without religion -- and I think this is more or less the case already, else how is it, for instance, that this war, unlike any of those before it, is not calling forth any "religious" reaction? -- what does that mean for "Christianity"?[2]

Bonhoeffer does not accept the end of religion on the terms of the world and therefore as an apologetic "sop" for modern secular man. Quite to the contrary, he welcomes this end of religion in the name of the Incarnation. When the Christian church can understand itself and its faith in such a way, it will have a better entre to the religionless world than it ever had with its religious a priori.

---

[1] It is interesting to note that at this point of departure from any reliance upon the premise of a "religious *a priori*" Bonhoeffer sets himself radically apart from his old theological master at Berlin, Reinhold Seeberg. A concise description of Bonhoeffer's understanding of the "religious *a priori*" has been given by Albrecht Schönherr, "Bonhoeffer Gedanken über die Kirche und ihre Predigt in der mündige gewordenen Welt," *Die mündige Welt*, I, p. 77: "Was heisst 'religiöses Apriori'? Es ist die durch die Jahrhunderte hindurch weitergetragene, stillschweigende Voraussetzung, der Mensch brauche den Gottesgedanken, um sich selbst zu verwirklichen, um seine Probleme zu lösen, um die Welt zu erkennen. Darauf baut die Verkündigung weithin auf und interpretiert ihre Texte demnach 'religiös'."

[2] Bonhoeffer, *Prisoner for God*, p. 123.

What is the character of this religion which Bonhoeffer rejects? Bethge[1] deciphers four such characteristics, and these have been substantiated and accepted by other investigators of Bonhoeffer's thought.[2]

1. Religion is individualism. Bonhoeffer sometimes called this "inwardness."[3] At other times he speaks of it as "conversion," all of which are attempts to leave the world for the sake of a Protestant, pietistic form of asceticism.

2. Religion is metaphysics. It is the attempt to add a superstructure to the world and to call this superstructure "God." It was this type of metaphysical two-story structure which marked the theology of the Middle Ages and which allied itself with what Bonhoeffer describes as the "heteronomy in the form of clericalism" as the fundamental principle of the Middle Ages."[4] This is the kind of sphere-thinking which Bonhoeffer so roundly denounced in his Ethics.

> . . . to think in terms of spheres is to think statically and is therefore, theologically speaking, to think in terms of laws.[5]

---

[1] Bethge, ibid., pp. 33-34.
[2] See Godsey, The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, pp. 248-259.
[3] Bonhoeffer, ibid., p. 163.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 66.

This in turn emphasizes Christianity as the religion of salvation from the world.

> Salvation means salvation from cares and need, from fears and longing, from sin and death into a better world beyond the grave. But is this really the distinctive feature of Christianity as proclaimed in the Gospels and St. Paul? I am sure it is not. The difference between the Christian hope of resurrection and a mythological hope is that the Christian hope sends a man back to his life on earth in a wholly new way. . . . Myths of salvation arise from human experiences of the boundary situation. Christ takes hold in the centre of his life.[1]

This leads to the third characteristic.

3. Religion is a compartmentalized sector of the world. It is the attempt to speak to man in the "border experiences" of the world. If theology can speak to man only in the "boundary situations", this is no more than making room for God in an isolated compartment of the world.

> I should like to speak of God not on the borders of life but at its center, not in weakness but in strength, not, therefore, in man's suffering and death but in his life and prosperity. On the borders it seems to me better to hold our peace and leave the problem unsolved. . . . The church stands not where human powers give out, on the borders, but in the center of the village.[2]

4. Religion is the *deus ex machina*. To hold that God is actually the *deus ex machina* is to say that He has a place in the world only in terms of "ultimate questions" or "unsolved problems." Religion becomes,

---

[1] Bonhoeffer, *Prisoner for God*, p. 154.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

then, the spiritual "chemist's shop." It is an effort to seek God in what we do not know, rather than to seek Him in precisely what is known.

> We should find God in what we do know, not in what we don't; not in outstanding problems, but in those we have already solved. This is true not only for the relation between Christianity and science, but also for wider human problems such as guilt, suffering and death. . .[1]

This points to the fact that God is no longer, nor should He have been, the working "hypothesis." This so-called working "hypothesis" has created religion, and in this manner it has sought to thwart the world's coming of age. This God must be dispensed with, and likewise this religion must be done away. Religion, because it is compartmentalized and "border-line," speaks only to a partial man. Faith speaks to a whole man. Therefore, concludes Bonhoeffer, "Jesus does not call men to a new religion but to life."[2]

Since the world has come of age, since it no longer requires the "religious _a priori_" and the "God hypothesis," since for secular man religion is a stage through which he has passed forever, an entirely new situation confronts the Christian in the world.

> Our coming of age forces us to a true recognition of our situation vis-a-vis God. God is teaching us that we must live as men who can get along very well without him.[3]

---

1. Ibid., p. 142.
2. _Ibid._, p. 167.
3. _Ibid._, pp. 163-164.

"Das Ende der christlichen Religion" -- what does this mean for Christianity? Already Bonhoeffer has set the stage. It means nothing short of a radically new interpretation of faith. The end of religion means the opening for a new venture -- a nonreligious interpretation of biblical ideas.

3. „ Die nicht-religiöse Interpretation biblischer Begriffe"

It has been pointed out above that basically Bonhoeffer rejects religion on the grounds that this is a supplementation of reality with a "God hypothesis" and an attendant compartmentalizing of the world and the religious. There are a number of aphoristic phrases which Bonhoeffer employs to capture this particular conception of religion. Religion is thinking in two spheres,[1] construing transcendence in the epistemological and metaphysical sense as that which is spatially beyond man,[2] capturing God in the boundary experiences of life,[3] depicting God's role as a "stop-gap,"[4] retreating from the world into man's inner affections,[5] an individualistic view of salvation,[6] attempting to cover up the world's godlessness with a religious veneer.[7]

---

[1] Ibid., p. 167.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 124.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 91.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 88, 111, 173.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

All such efforts are a refusal to come to terms with man's coming of age, i.e., the fact that modern man is nonreligious man. More serious than this, however, these are subtle, and at times not so subtle, evasions of the concrete, worldly reality of faith.

As Gerhard Ebeling contends,[1] one of the motivating factors in Bonhoeffer's thought is a compelling intellectual honesty. Intellectual honesty demands that the theologian recognize that this is the kind of world in which he lives and in which he speaks. More than this, however, is the theological conviction that God has brought man to this point in history. "God himself compels us to recognize it."[2]

It should be recognized at this point that Bonhoeffer clearly sees both a genetic and a material relationship between the phenomenon of modern secularization and the Christian faith. First, the process of secularization has taken place on Christian soil, and this is no accident.[3] Actually, the process of secularization is the working out of the implications of the Christian's relation to the world. It is not the Christian's responsibility to divinize the world, but rather his responsibility is actually to "de-divinize" the world, i.e., to allow the world to be purely and simply the world.[4] Strangely, however,

---

[1] Gerhard Ebeling, "Die nicht-religiöse Interpretation biblischer Begriffe," pp. 64-65.

[2] Bonhoeffer, Prisoner for God, p. 163.

[3] See Bonhoeffer, Ethics, pp. 32-33, 35.

[4] On a biblical basis it would seem that such a responsibility is unquestionable. It is, therefore, beside the point to argue the reality of the "world come of age" and to question this as a serious concern of theology as does Boudewijn Rietveld, Saecularisatie als Probleem der theologische Ethiek ('S-Gravenhage: Van Keulen N.V., 1957), in his dissertation "Stellingen," n.p.

Christian man and secularized man, i.e., religionless man, find themselves together and not separated at a material point as well. Christian man is man in faith; he is not homo religiosus. Secular man, man come of age, finds himself, likewise a religionless man. At these two points the two stand together, though perhaps and indeed so, for different reasons. Christian man and secular man are committed to life in this world and are determined to let the world be the world. Secular man and Christian man know that religion is not an option for a man so committed. Beyond these points of similarity there are significant differences. The world's coming of age and the abolition of religion do not negate the Christian faith. A new mandate confronts the Christian thinker: "How can he speak to man come of age in a religionless manner?" This is essentially Bonhoeffer's question: "What does Christ mean for us today?"

If man recognizes that this is the actual situation, he must also recognize that he as man belongs wholly to this world. Religion is an attempt to escape the reality of the world, or at least it is a compartmentalizing of the two. The emphasis which was found in the Ethics is at the forefront here. Man lives in the "penultimate," and, try as he may, he cannot live anywhere else, though he may depend upon the "ultimate." In this way Bonhoeffer safeguards himself from any superficial identification with the "world come of age." This distinction must be kept in view, or else it would be quite easy to interpret Bonhoeffer falsely at this point and conclude, as Ebeling fears many do, with this kind of syllogism:

> Der heutige Mensch ist religionslos. Der christliche Glaube ist nich Religion. Also ist der heutige Mensch Christ.[1]

Ebeling rightly concludes:

> Dieser Syllogismus spottet ja schon der Regeln der Logik. Aber das ist doch in der Tat gemeint: Die biblische Botschaft verträgt nicht nur, sondern fordert letztlich von sich aus die nicht-religiöse Interpretation.[2]

It is for this reason that Bonhoeffer demands a new approach to theology, one which Barth began in his critique of religion but did not carry through, and to which the prison theologian devotes himself in a fragmentary way.

While the plight of the Christian in a "world come of age" may be the task of living etsi Deus non daretur, this does not mean for Bonhoeffer that the reality of Christ is doubted for one moment. Indeed, Gerhard Ebeling is correct in emphasizing that first and foremost a non-religious interpretation is a Christological interpretation.[3] A non-religious interpretation is a faith-ful interpretation, and it is, thereby an interpretation which begins with and is determined to know nothing but the worldly implications of faith in Jesus Christ. It would be a mistake to understand Bonhoeffer's concern for a new interpretation as first an appeal for a new language of theology. The program which Bonhoeffer has in mind goes far deeper and is far more radical than this.

---

1. Ebeling, "Die nicht-religiöse Interpretation biblischer Begriffe," p. 48.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 21, 66.

At the same time, it is a program which in one sense Bonhoeffer sees as the continuation of a project begun earlier by Karl Barth. In this sense it stands in a definite continuity with the Christocentric emphasis of Barth, and at the same time places itself in radical discontinuity with any form of an older apologetics. Whereas Barth had earlier set revelation in antithesis to religion, Bonhoeffer starts from this point and does what Barth never dared to do, i.e., to apply this theological conclusion to the actual historical situation of secularization.[1]

If religion is no more a viable option for secular man and if for the sake of a right understanding of the revelation in Jesus Christ religion must be no more, the new interpretation to remain "Christian interpretation" must meet the criteria which Ebeling finds in the later writings of Bonhoeffer.

> Und wir haben dann von jenen Grundvoraussetzungen her immerhin einige wesentliche Answeisungen mit auf den Weg bekommen als Grundregeln dieser Interpretation: Sie muss sein christologische Interpretation, konkrete Interpretation und Interpretation des Glaubens. Noch einmal sei daran erinnert, dass das nicht drei verschiedene Dinge sind. Die uns aufgegebene Interpretation ist entweder dies alles miteinander, oder sie ist weder christologische Interpretation noch konkrete Interpretation noch Interpretation des Glaubens.[2]

The question still remains: What kind of Christological, concrete interpretation of faith had Bonhoeffer in mind? One gains Christological insights in the prison papers only by indirection, i.e., as

---

[1] On the American scene this is what Harvey Cox has attempted in his The Secular City (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965).

[2] Ebeling, "Die nicht-religiöse Interpretation biblischer Begriffe," p. 40.

Bonhoeffer reflects upon the Christian life and, thereby, the kind of Christology which undergirds this quest. One of the clearest expressions is found in his letter of June 27, 1944:

> The Christian, unlike the devotees of the salvation myths, does not need a last refuge in the eternal from earthly tasks and difficulties. But like Christ himself ("My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?") he must drink the earthly cup to the lees, and only in his doing that is the crucified and risen Lord with him, and he crucified and risen with Christ. This world must not be prematurely written off. In this the Old and New Testaments are at one. Myths of salvation arise from human experiences of the boundary situation. Christ takes hold of a man in the centre of his life.[1]

What is obvious here is that Bonhoeffer has remained consistent with the Kondeszens-Christology of the Berlin lectures of 1933. The Christ who lays hold of man in the center of life is the Christ who is free for others in his weakness, his suffering, his death. Bonhoeffer's *theologia crucis* still remains pivotal. This particular Christological understanding is intensified when Bonhoeffer speaks of God's transcendence. The transcendence of God cannot be abstract and metaphysical. It must be concrete and "I-thou" relational in kind.

> Our relation to God is not a religious relationship to a supreme Being, absolute in power and goodness, which is a spurious conception of transcendence, but a new life for others, through participation in the being of God. The transcendence consists not in tasks beyond our scope and power, but in the nearest thing[2] to hand. God in human form, not, as in other religions, in animal form -- the monstrous, chaotic, remote, and terrifying -- nor yet in abstract form -- the absolute, metaphysical, infinite, etc., nor yet in the Greek divine-human of autonomous man, but man existing for others, and hence the Crucified.[3]

---

[1] Bonhoeffer, *Prisoner for God*, p. 154.

[2] "Thing" is a bad translation in this context. "Thou" would be a better term.

[3] Bonhoeffer, *Prisoner for God*, p. 179.

Christ is the Lord of the world precisely because he has entered that world and suffered within and for that world. This has consistently been Bonhoeffer's theme.

> The vicarious character of the life of Christ and the participation in this being as faith, this has *its* strong emphasis from the beginning. . . . Consequently the idea of finding Christ not on the boundaries of life but in the midst of life already has its fully developed place in *Creation and Fall*.[1]

With this Christological orientation in view it becomes apparent that the motivation of Bonhoeffer to develop a nonreligious interpretation is to answer his question: "How can we reclaim for Christ a world which has come of age?" Regin Prenter is therefore correct when he writes:

> Die religionslose Interpretation der theologischen Begriffe, die Bonhoeffer bei Barth vermisst, würde im Gegenteil das Gegenüber Gottes zur Welt nicht als Negation, sondern als Herrsein auffassen. Und das Herrsein Gottes schliesst in radikaler Weise jene Beziehungslosigkeit der Offenbarung zur Welt aus. Umgekehrt ist es ja ganz klar, dass eben das Herrsein Gottes die Mündigkeit der Welt, um Bonhoeffers prägnante Formel hier zu benutzen, nicht aufhebt, sondern im Gegenteil voraussetzt und bestätigt. Die religionslose Interpretation der Offenbarung, die Bonhoeffer sucht, will also vor allem die Beziehung der Offenbarung *Gottes* zur *mündigen Welt* zum Ausdruck bringen.[3]

Additional clarification of the concept of nonreligious interpretation can be seen when attention is focused not simply on the

---

1. Bethge, "The Challenge of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life and Thought," p. 32.
2. Regin Prenter, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer und Karl Barths Offenbarungspositivismus," p. 15.

Christological question but on the old Lutheran distinction between law and Gospel. Bonhoeffer sensed the relation between law and religion:

> The Pauline question whether circumcision is a condition of justification is today, to my mind, the question whether religion is the condition of salvation. Freedom from circumcision is at the same time freedom from religion.[1]

The implication of this statement for a nonreligious interpretation would be "that these concepts must now be interpreted in such a way as not to make religion a precondition of faith (cf. circumcision in Paul!)."[2] This very clearly places the issue of religion under the rubric of law. A religious interpretation is therefore a legalistic interpretation. This seems to be the meaning of a passage in the Ethics, which without the prison papers would remain cryptic, to say the least.

> The false antithesis of moralizing and religious themes must be replaced by the true distinction and connexion between law and Gospel.[3]

While this discussion of religion as paralleling Paul's conflict with the Judaizing-circumcision question of the early church does place Bonhoeffer's concept of religion under the general discussion of law, this should in no case lead to a hasty identification of religion with law. Circumcision is not identified by Paul with the law. While it is

---

1. Bonhoeffer, Prisoner for God, p. 123.
2. Ibid., p. 149.
3. Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 283.

not at all certain that Bonhoeffer understood this distinction and therefore it cannot be claimed that Bonhoeffer did not identify religion with law, there would certainly be general indications that he was far too sophisticated theologically to fall vulnerable to such an easy identification. As Ebeling scores his point so well, to identify religion with law would in turn necessitate the identification of nonreligiousness with lawlessness.[1] Bonhoeffer would certainly not be guilty of such irresponsibility! There is a far subtler issue here. If a right distinction is not made between law and Gospel, religion can easily be subsumed under Gospel and the end result will be to make the Gospel into law. It would seem that Bonhoeffer in his sensitivity to the problem of the relationship of law and Gospel is insisting that religion be understood within the context of law, and only in this way can the Gospel be Gospel.

The thesis stated earlier was that Bonhoeffer in calling for a nonreligious interpretation is not asking for a new theological language, but he is in reality asking for a new theological method which has very concrete implications for the proclamation of the Gospel and the shape of the church in a "world come of age." The method which he sets forth but was never able to complete involved two essential ingredients: a Christological interpretation and a right distinction between law and Gospel. In this sense the nonreligious interpretation is a Christological interpretation, a concrete interpretation, and at the same moment an interpretation of faith. The phenomenon of a

---

[1] Ebeling, "Die nicht-religiöse Interpretation biblischer Begriffe," p. 54.

"world come of age" and the reality of faith can encounter one another only on such grounds, contended Bonhoeffer.

> To this extent we may say that the process we have described by which the world came of age was an abandonment of a false conception of God, and a clearing of the decks for the God of the Bible, who conquers power and space in the world by his weakness. This must be the starting point for our "worldly" interpretation.[1]

4. „Heilige Weltlichkeit"

It remains now for a brief statement to be made regarding the concrete implications which Bonhoeffer's recovery of the natural and his recognition of the status of the world as having become mature have for the Christian's life in such a world. In short, how does the Christian as a part of the *saeculum* live out his life in the *saeculum*?

It was Bonhoeffer's conviction that Christians had too frequently devoted their attention to the "other-worldly" and had thereby sought to escape the demands and responsibilities of this world. His reading of the Old Testament during his prison period brought home to him the this-worldly character of faith.[2] The above analysis of religion would indicate that for Bonhoeffer any kind of withdrawal, be it metaphysical, pietistic, or ascetic, is a repudiation of concrete faith and a taking refuge in religion. Heretofore, the Christian proclamation has always presupposed the religious premise. It is precisely this

---

1. Bonhoeffer, *Prisoner for God*, p. 123.
2. *Ibid*., p. 154.

premise which is now gone and which enables the Christian to find himself fully a part of the world again.

> How do we speak of God without religion, i.e., without the temporally-influenced presuppositions of metaphysics, inwardness, and so on? How do we speak . . . in secular fashion of God? In what way are we in a religionless and secular sense Christians, in what way are we the Ekklesia, "those who are called forth," not conceiving of ourselves religiously as specially favoured, but as wholly belonging to the world.[1]

Without the "religious premise" and without "religion" as securities, man finds himself as "wholly belonging to the world." Why is this so? The stance of the Christian is one of faith, not of religion, but, faith in the Incarnate One. As was seen in the exposition of the Ethics, Christology and ethical life are inseparable. The life of the Christian in the world is one of *conformation* with the *Man for others*.

Barth is correct when he finds Bonhoeffer's identification of man with the weakness and suffering of God in Christ a kind of *Imitatio Christi*.

> Und was nun die Sache mit dem Mitleiden der Leiden Gottes usw. betrifft, so scheint es mir deutlich, dass es sich dabei um eine Variante des von ihm ja auch so mit Recht so betonten Imitatio-Gedankens handelt. Wie sollte man sich das nicht einfach sagen lassen: von einem Mann, von dem es gefordert und dem es auch gegeben war, gerade das nicht nur zu denken und zu sagen, sondern auch zu leben? Mir ist es längst klar, dass ich dieser Sache in der KD an seinem Ort breiten Raum werde geben müssen. War Bonnhoeffer der Meinung, die ganze Theologie müsse nun gerade aug diesen Boden gestellt werden? Es kann sein, dass er in seiner Zelle zu Zeiten eben dieser Meinung war.[2]

---

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

[2] Karl Barth, in a letter to Landessuperintendent P. W. Herrenbrück, December 21, 1952, in *Die mündige Welt*, I, 122.

Whatever else one may make of Bonhoeffer's emphasis on the Christian's suffering "with God in his hour of agony," it is obvious that this is an extension of the second form of conformation in his *Ethics*, i.e., conformation to Christ the Crucified. William Hamilton remarks that this is a "somewhat different view of the Lordship of Jesus than we find" in the *Ethics*.[1] Hamilton is only partly accurate. Bonhoeffer seems to move in the prison papers away from the triumphant and reigning Lord of the Resurrection to an almost exclusive emphasis upon the Lord of suffering and humiliation. Whether this is an adequate Christological basis for a proper theological assessment of the secular will be discussed in the following section. What is important here is to take notice that the *Imitatio Christi*, which Barth finds here in Bonhoeffer, is integrally related to the second form of conformation in the *Ethics*.

Gone now is religion and with it every possible means of escape from the world. Gone are the old ways of speaking about God. The question of speaking becomes one of acting for Bonhoeffer:

> So our traditional language must lose its force and fall silent, and our Christianity today will be confined to two things: praying, and doing the right among men. All Christian thinking, speaking and organizing must be reborn out of that praying and that action. . . . Until then the Christian cause will be a silent and hidden one; but there will be those who pray and do the right and await God's time.[2]

Bonhoeffer goes further to say that the church

---

[1] William Hamilton, "A Secular Theology for a World Come of Age," *Theology Today*, XVIII, No. 4 (January 1962), 455.

[2] Bonhoeffer, *Prisoner for God*, pp. 140-141.

> . . . must not underestimate the importance of human "example" . . . . It is not abstract argument but concrete "example" that gives its word force and power.[1]

While this may tend to relativize theological speaking to ethical example, the above statement must still be seen to be concerned with the church's "word." One does not have to choose between speaking and acting.[2] The two must go together. That which seems to be the point of Bonhoeffer's statement is that a converse separation in the past has taken place, i.e., speaking without action. It is from the isolation of speaking, which too often has been what Bonhoeffer calls religion, that man is called in a world come of age.

> He must therefore plunge himself into the life of a godless world, without attempting to gloss over its ungodliness with a veneer of religion or trying to transfigure it. He must live a "worldly" life and so participate in the suffering of God. . . . To be a Christian does not mean to be religious in a particular way, to cultivate a particular way of ascetism (as a sinner, a penitent or a saint), but to be a man. It is not some religious act which makes a Christian what he is, but participation in the suffering of God in the life of the world.[3]

What is required is not simply a corollary of the word but its direct implication, namely, a metanoia.

---

1. Ibid., pp. 180-181.
2. Bonhoeffer's words must be taken seriously but they must also be taken in a total context. This seems to be the most serious flaw in an otherwise sensitive interpretation by Oscar Hammelsbeck. Hammelsbeck relies too heavily on such isolated passages, and his essay thereby seems to support a relativizing of the church's task of speaking. See Hammelsbeck, "Zu Bonhoeffers Gedanken über die mündig gewordene Welt."
3. Bonhoeffer, Prisoner for God, p. 163.

> One must abandon every attempt to make something of oneself, whether it be a saint, a converted sinner, a churchman (the priestly type, so-called!), a righteous man or an unrighteous one, a sick man or a healthy one. This is what I mean by worldliness -- taking life in one's stride, with all its duties and problems, its successes and failures, its experiences and helplessness. It is such a life that we throw ourselves utterly in the arms of God and participate in his sufferings in the world and watch with Christ in Gethsemane. That is faith, that is metanoia, and that is what makes a man a Christian.[1]

Bonhoeffer left to the church but few other suggestions as to the concrete implications of a religionless life of faith in the world. He left more, however, than a slogan. He left a summons and the beginnings of a blueprint for the theological and practical life of the church in the world when he called for a "holy worldliness."[2]

D. A Critical Reflection

Bonhoeffer's greeting of a "world come of age" and his subsequent reflections on the implications of that theme have been met with predictably mixed reactions. It is not necessary to spend time answering the defensive attitudes of those, such as Eberhard Bethge mentions, who say "we can only hope that at the very last Bonhoeffer recovered his

---

1. Ibid., p. 169.
2. In view of the fact that Bishop Robinson in Honest to God, pp. 84-104, has reversed Bonhoeffer's terms, i.e., into "worldly holiness," caution should be exercised that proper order and emphasis be given to Bonhoeffer's summons. If it is "holiness" about which one is to speak, then this is to revert to religion which Bonhoeffer found so objectionable. Faith calls the Christian to a concreteness in the world which can only be termed "worldliness." Perhaps there is more consistency to Bishop Robinson than meets the eye. His attempt to wed Tillich, Bultmann and Bonhoeffer simply cannot "come off," precisely because Bishop Robinson is reconstructing a "religiosity" which Bonhoeffer found so necessary to reject.

faith again."[1] Such a criticism can be understood if faith is conceived religiously, but on the other hand such a defensive response ignores completely Bonhoeffer's attempt to recover the biblical and reformation understanding of faith as an unqualified reliance on God's revelatory Word in Jesus Christ. Such faith hardly requires what the critic presupposes, namely, the "religious garb," which Bonhoeffer rightly understood must go.

Bonhoeffer's theological efforts have forced in the modern day a new and compelling focus on the relations between the church and the world. The focus upon this problem of relation cannot be sharpened without a consideration and serious encounter with one of Bonhoeffer's characteristic themes, i.e., the concept of religion. Yet it is at this point, perhaps more than at any other, that Bonhoeffer has been subjected to the closest scrutiny. Daniel Jenkins, the English theologian, has studied this problem in relation to Bonhoeffer and Barth perhaps more than any contemporary critic.[2] He supplies a helpful summary of the ideas covered by men such as Barth and Bonhoeffer.

> These notions express the belief that mature Christian faith can exist independently of the religious activities with which it has always been closely associated and that, although this is more debatable, this is the only form in which it can exist for many people today.[3]

---

1. Bethge, Die mündige Welt, I, 19.
2. Daniel Jenkins, Beyond Religion (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962). Jenkins' program is revealed in the interesting subtitle to the book, "The Truth and Error in 'Religionless Christianity'."
3. Ibid., p. 9.

In actuality, Jenkins' book amounts to a rejection of both parts of the idea as he has summarized it, although he renders a relative "clean-up" job on the particular forms of religion which traditionally have been associated with the Christian faith. Jenkins' critical response and constructive result is helpful at this point because it exemplifies what must not be done with Bonhoeffer's thought if its true thrust is to reach the modern church. Jenkins reduces the whole insight of religionless Christianity to the level of methodology; it is to be used by faith as a perspective for the criticism of religion which must be made in our time. This is hardly what Bonhoeffer intended. Religion can and must be transcended through faith, insists Jenkins, but it cannot and must not be dispensed with. Such a "both-and" argument eventually pits itself into a discussion of what is true and what is false religion. Jenkins, therefore, rejects religionless Christianity as a concept of substantive value.

> Religion thrusts man 'into a realm beyond the superficial appearance of every day.' It makes him aware of the claims of another world than that conditioned by space and time and of other purposes than those which present themselves naturally to him in the midst of his secular occasions. . . . This is the more deadly because religion so readily creates a world of its own, which is neither the real world in which faith lives nor the mixed and confused world of everyday.[1]

His most significant statement is found on the following page, where he writes, "Just as religion is inescapable, so is its special world."[2]

Here in the work of a modern theologian, and one well acquainted with this particular theme of Bonhoeffer, one finds precisely the theological approach with which Bonhoeffer does battle. Jenkins participates in the precise "sphere-thinking" which Bonhoeffer condemned. There are three distinct realms or spheres which he envisions: the "real world" known to faith, the sphere of the "superficial appearance of every day" and the "special world" of religion mediating between the two. Here is a theologian using Bonhoeffer's own terms; there is no danger of forcing another meaning into his terms. The sphere of religion is not taken as ultimate, it is only to point toward and to represent the ultimate faith-world which lies somewhere beyond the world of everyday life.

---

[1] Ibid., p. 71.
[2] Ibid., p. 72.

This brief exposition of a critical response to Bonhoeffer at the point of his understanding of religion serves to point to the very situation of which Bonhoeffer is so fearful. This illustration serves to underscore Bonhoeffer's conviction that any kind of religious interpretation functions as a separation of the reality of the world from the reality of Christ. When this separation is effected, the conclusion can only be a confusion of law and Gospel, and faith is thereby legalized. This legalizing of faith becomes apparent when Jenkins insists that the religionless Christianity is of methodological utility in criticizing and acting as a criterion of religion. The least which can be said of Jenkins' three-sphere concept is that the connection and relation between these spheres is tenuous. Jenkins has not seen the problem in the acute fashion which is so necessary if a unity of the secular and the Christian is to become an actuality. In the distinctions which Jenkins makes, what can prevent the world of everyday from becoming in a final way autonomous, and likewise what can prevent faith from becoming a religiously isolated reality independent of the world?

In exploring Jenkins' response to Bonhoeffer's religionless Christianity one of the major and abiding contributions of Bonhoeffer's thought becomes obvious. The attempts on the part of Bonhoeffer to distinguish without separating the ultimate from the penultimate, law from Gospel, the secular from the Christian is of major consequence for contemporary theology. Particularly is this true for a right theological assessment of the secular.

Bonhoeffer is actually taking up a theme which Luther had faced with such daring honesty in the doctrine of the two realms.[1] A right distinction between law and Gospel, between the secular and the Christian can be made only within the context of the reality of Christ. The two, law and Gospel, are related polemically and in this sense bear witness to their common ground, namely, the reality in Christ.

> Luther was protesting against a Christianity which was striving for independence and detaching itself from the reality in Christ. He protested with the help of the secular and in the name of a better Christianity. *So, too, today,* when Christianity is employed as a polemical weapon against the secular, this must be done in the name of a better secularity and above all it must not lead back to a static predominance of the spiritual sphere as an end in itself.[2]

---

[1] See chapter II of this dissertation.

[2] Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, p. 65.

This would indicate that Bonhoeffer viewed Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms as having been related polemically in the same manner as he has sought to relate the ultimate and the penultimate, the secular and the Christian. Religion, therefore, cannot stand in any mediating position between the world and faith, and faith's function is infinitely more than to criticize and determine good from bad religion. Faith is actually conformation with Christ in the world. In this conformation the Christian actively participates in the overcoming of the dichotomy between secular and the Christian, and theologically speaking the same dichotomy is overcome in the Incarnate Christ, whose coming into the world makes his reality and the reality of the world one. Unless the modern critic can find a better way of uniting the two, i.e., world and faith, law and Gospel, he must accept Bonhoeffer's verdict that religion can serve no positive function in this endeavor. It would seem highly questionable from the position of Christian theology, i.e., theology which is bound to the revelatory Word of God in Christ, that any other possibility would be open to pursue. One would have to show that religion is Christologically rather than anthropocentrically based, and this would be exceedingly difficult to prove. The conclusion stands that the distinction which Luther sought to make and which Bonhoeffer has attempted with remarkable success is a long-standing contribution, not only to Lutheran theology, but, to ecumenical theological dialogue.

This leads, however, to a more serious question which must be posed to Bonhoeffer rather than his critics. The right distinction between the secular and the Christian is predicated upon a particular

Christological premise. The entire preceding exposition has sought to underscore this factor in Bonhoeffer's thought. Whatever were the resulting consequences, the underlying *cantus firmus* of Bonhoeffer's thought was a particular *Kondeszens*-Christology. This was the sustaining motif throughout his life's endeavor. At the present time no one has devoted concentrated attention to this factor in his theology.[1] This is so basic that until a thorough examination and critique of Bonhoeffer's Christology is attempted a real response to Bonhoeffer's challenge and thought will remain immature and peripheral. The remarks which follow are offered only as a beginning in this direction.

Bonhoeffer is resolutely committed to the theological fact that the distinctions spoken of above and their real unity can only be grasped from a Christological standpoint, i.e., from the standpoint of the condescendence of God in Jesus Christ. In the *Ethics* this Christology was given a somewhat traditional three-fold exposition: Jesus Christ the Incarnate, Jesus Christ the Crucified, and Jesus Christ the Resurrected and Exalted, with the predominant emphasis upon Jesus Christ the Crucified.[2] In the *Ethics* Bonhoeffer writes:

> The new man lives in the world like any other man. Often there is little to distinguish him from the rest. Nor does he attach importance to distinguishing himself, but only to distinguishing Christ for the sake of the brethren. Transfigured though he is in the form of the *Risen One*, here he bears only the sign of the *cross* and the *judgment*.[3]

---

[1] The study of Jaroslav Pelikan, "Bonhoeffer's *Christologie* of 1933," in *The Place of Bonhoeffer*, pp. 143-166, is a beginning in this direction.

[2] See Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, pp. 17-25.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

As previously stated, during the prison period, Bonhoeffer seems to have moved all the more in the direction of an exclusive Christology of the suffering and death of Christ. This emphasis in *Prisoner for God* is captured in such cryptic phrases as God as "weak and powerless in the world," Christ helping man "by his weakness and suffering," "God in his suffering," and God "at the disposal of man." It would seem that in the last period of Bonhoeffer's writings the emphasis which he had made in 1933 in the *Christologie* becomes all the more emphatic. The Cross is not just one *locus* of Christology, the Cross becomes the key to all other themes. This is certainly in line with the remarks which he made in 1933:

> Jesus Christ is not in some divine nature, *ousia*, substance, or essence; that is, he is not God in a self-evident and explainable manner, but only in faith. This divine being does not exist. If Jesus Christ is to be described as God then one must not speak about his divine essence, not about his omnipotence, and his omniscience, but only about this weak man among sinners, about his cradle and his cross. If we are dealing with the divinity of Jesus we must speak especially of his weakness.[1]

The reformer Luther was prone to make this same emphasis:

> Therefore begin thou there where Christ began, namely, in the womb of the Virgin, in the manger, and at his mother's breasts. . . . For to this end he came down, was born, was conversant among men, suffered, was crucified and died, that by all means he might set forth himself plainly before our eyes. . . .[2]

---

[1] Bonhoeffer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, III, 233.

[2] Luther, *Lectures on Galatians*, ed. Philip S. Watson, revised edition of the 1575 English translation (London: James Clark and Co., 1953), pp. 43-44.

Particularly within Lutheran circles there has been a long tradition of so-called "kenotic Christology." In the nineteenth century Gottfried Thomasius set himself to the task of formulating a Christology which could be called a "kenosis of the Logos."[1] What is unique with Bonhoeffer, however, is the uniting of a *theologia crucis* with an open, enthusiastic response to a "world come of age," to a world which has learned to live in an autonomous manner. In this sense Bonhoeffer joins the themes of the Cross and the "world come of age" to speak of the Lordship of Christ. This is a peculiar way in which to speak of Lordship as Regin Prenter has pointed out,

> Die Formel, durch die Bonhoeffer gewöhnlich die Beziehung Gottes zur mündigen Welt bezeichnet, ist *das Fürsein Gottes für die Welt*. Und dieses Fürsein wird demnach oft als *das Leiden Gottes an der Welt* bezeichnet.[2]

It is precisely this Lordship Christology which is at the same time a Christology of the weakness and humiliation of Christ which lies at the base of Bonhoeffer's attempt to recover the natural or the secular. Eberhard Bethge supports this conclusion:

> The Christological background gives the courage to let everything be what it is. . . . It had not been heard before with the emphasis that Christ's Lordship corresponds to secularity, discipleship to participating in this worldliness. The natural, the profane, the reasonable, the human, the polyphony of real life gets its share not against, but in, Christ.[3]

---

[1] See Gottfried Thomasius, *Christ's Person and Work* in Claude Welch, ed., *God and Incarnation in Mid-Nineteenth Century German Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 46-56.

[2] Prenter, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer und Karl Barths Offenbarungspositivismus," p. 16.

[3] Bethge, "The Challenge of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life and Thought," p. 33.

There is unquestionable biblical ground for such a theology of the Cross and the suffering and humiliation of God in Christ. Within the Synoptic Gospels there is a very overt *ebed Yahweh* Christology of suffering.[1] The concept of Lordship is, likewise, one of the prominent New Testament Christological motifs.[2] What is most difficult as a biblical problem, and hence a theological problem, is how the two can be brought together. The judgment of Oscar Cullmann is helpful at this point:

> It is the great significance of the *Kyrios* concept that it made possible for the first time what we call the Christology of the New Testament. It furnished the foundation for fixing the relationship between the various Christological explanations in *Heilsgeschichte*.[3]

It would, therefore, not be theological verbal gymnastics to insist that there is a significant difference in seeing the suffering of Christ in the context of his Lordship and deriving his Lordship from his suffering. It would appear that Bonhoeffer does the latter. If Lordship is taken to be the basic New Testament Christological concept, and this seems to be unquestionably the case particularly in the Pauline epistles and Luke-Acts, the suffering of Christ, i.e., the *ebed Yahweh* Christology must be seen within the broader context of Lordship.

Certainly Lordship is the essential Christological concept in dealing with a theological understanding of the secular. The scope of the Lordship of Jesus is universal and cosmic.[1] The period of his Lordship is the period "between the times," i.e., between the times of the initial revelation of Lordship in the Cross and the Resurrection and the final Consummation. It is not simply by his suffering and death that Christ reigns between the times, but it is the triumphant suffering Christ, not simply the Christ who in his suffering is still at the mercy of the world, who reigns and reigns because of the Resurrection. The Lordship of Christ "between the times" is centered in the church.[2] This does not mean that his Lordship is exclusively there, but the church is the locus of knowledge and acknowledgement of his Lordship. In this sense the church shares in a wider and more embracive Lordship of the world, as together they await the final, consummative Lordship.

---

[1] Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, trans. S. A. Guthrie and C. A. M. Hall (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), pp. 51-82.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 195-237.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 236.

This is but a brief outline of essential points of an adequate Christology of Lordship.[3] If one holds that a Christology of Lordship is essential for a recovery of the secular, and at this point Bonhoeffer would be in agreement, then it is necessary that a right Christological order be established. To begin with suffering and humiliation and proceed from this point is to run the danger of Ebionite flirtation. Several contemporary theological scholars have followed this course and have admitted their indebtedness to Bonhoeffer's thought in this

---

1. Cf. Phil. 2:6-11; I Peter 3:22; Ephesians 1:10, 20-22; Colossians 1:16-20; 2:10, 15.
2. See the study of Eduard Schweizer, Lordship and Discipleship (Naperville, Illinois: Alec Allenson Inc., 1960), particularly on p. 108.
3. See the concluding chapter of this dissertation for a fuller treatment of this theme.

respect.[1] It is interesting that both Gerhard Ebeling and Paul van Buren have some of their greatest difficulties with the doctrine of the Lordship of Christ. Ebeling can make no use of the concept, and Walter Künneth has rather pointedly told him why: Jesus cannot be Lord if he is simply Jesus.[2] Van Buren's fondness for the Bonhoeffer phrase, "the man for others," places this concept centrally in his attempt to do a theology for secular man. In van Buren's terms "His (Jesus') uniqueness. . . did not make him 'more than a man'."[3] Of course, Bonhoeffer cannot be held responsible for the heresies of others, and particularly is this the case when material for an exposition of his thought is so fragmentary and aphoristic. Nevertheless, the work of these who follow him might serve to sharpen perception into the Christological program which he initiated in 1933 and continued through the prison papers. Jaroslav Pelikan, commenting on the Christologie lectures raised the pertinent question which is equally pertinent to the Christology of the prison papers: "Is it symptomatic that he barely extricates himself from the Ebionite heresy?"[4]

Could it be possible that the predominant emphasis upon Lordship in suffering and humiliation in Bonhoeffer is at least partly responsible for the difficulties which he apparently has in the prison papers with

---

1. Gerhard Ebeling, The Nature of Faith, trans. R. G. Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), and Paul van Buren, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1963).
2. Walter Künneth, Glauben an Jesus? (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1962).
3. van Buren, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel, pp. 53-54.
4. Jaroslav Pelikan, "Bonhoeffer's Christologie of 1933," in The Place of Bonhoeffer, p. 164.

the doctrine of the church and eschatology. While the doctrine of the church does not fade from view, the identification of the sufferings of the world and the suffering of Christ make a doctrine of the church tenuous. And, certainly, the letter of June 27, 1944, has a strange ring of a kind of completely "realized eschatology."[1]

The thesis expounded earlier in this dissertation[2] was to the effect that a proper theological understanding of the secular involves one necessarily in taking cognizance of the temporally oriented manner in which the biblical understanding of the world is set forth. This thesis is not unrelated to a proper reckoning with the Christological motif of Lordship. Indeed, an understanding of Lordship presupposes the kind of linear movement of history which has its basis in the biblical *Heilsgeschichte*. The mid-point of that linear construct is the event of Christ. From this perspective one can deal properly with the Lordship of Christ over the creation, i.e., the world. Likewise, from this mid-point one must deal with the final point of the historical time-line, i.e., consummation. Between the latter two points of the line stand the church and the present world or time over which the initiated Lordship of Christ is already a present reality. Without the Lordship of Christ over the creation Bonhoeffer's "penultimate" is left to go its own way in a completely autonomous manner. Without the Lordship of Christ being consummated in a "new heaven and a new earth" the "penultimate" is left without the hope of the "ultimate."

---

[1] Bonhoeffer, *Prisoner for God*, pp. 204-206.

[2] See chapter II.

And without the Lordship of Christ extending to the beginning (alpha) and the end (omega) there is no possibility of a Christian identification with the world.

In a very significant way Bonhoeffer raised the question of the secular for contemporary theology, and thanks to the forceful manner in which that question was raised it simply will not allow itself to be put to rest. Bonhoeffer defined the problem and suggested in a general way the Christological method of pursuit. Any attempt to deal with this question must reckon with Bonhoeffer's fragmentary Christological attempt. It is at this point where the dialogue concerning a theological understanding of the secular must meet. This critical response has attempted to focus on this issue and in this way to further the dialogue.

V. FRIEDRICH GOGARTEN AND THE QUESTION OF THE SECULAR: SECULAR FAITH

Gerhard Ebeling[1] has correctly sensed a certain relationship between Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Friedrich Gogarten. This relationship, as Ebeling records, was not one of direct relation but one founded upon similar statements of the problem of secularization. In this sense Bonhoeffer and Gogarten have paralleled each other, though not intetionally. A theological treatment of the phenomenon of secularization must, therefore, deal with the thought of Friedrich Gogarten, not only since he has spent more time with this problem than any other contemporary theologian, but he has had the opportunity to go into the problem in depth, an opportunity which was not afforded Bonhoeffer because of his untimely death.

Since this relationship with Bonhoeffer is more indirect than intentional, it would be more fruitful to see the emergence of Gogarten's thought within the context of those who were his actual theological colleagues. More than either of the two theologians previously expounded in this dissertation, Friedrich Gogarten played a determinative role in the early movements of the so-called "dialectical theology." The origins of this movement in theology can be located between the years 1921 and 1923 with the publication of four significant works: Karl Barth's second edition

---

1. Gerhard Ebeling, "Die nicht-religiöse Interpretation biblischer Begriffe," Die mündige Welt, II, 16-17.

of the *Römerbrief*,[1] Gogarten's *Die religiöse Entscheidung*,[2] Emil Brunner's *Erlebnis, Erkenntnis und Glaube*[3] and Eduard Thurneysen's *Dostoevsky*.[4] In the fall of 1922 the theological journal, *Zwischen den Zeiten*,[5] was begun under the editorship of Georg Merz with Barth, Gogarten and Thurneysen as the principal figures. These theologians were to be joined later by Brunner and Rudolf Bultmann. This journal continued to be the center of a new theological reformation until it was dissolved under the pressure of theological differences and political divisions in 1933. The "new" dialectical theologians were united in their opposition to the tendencies of Neo-Protestantism (through which they had all worked in their theological education in the German and Swiss universities in the early part of the twentieth century) which chose to ground belief in God in terms of the "religious *a priori*"[6] and piety as it expressed itself in the psychological experience of man. This opposition led the new theologians to stress the transcendence of God over the various forms of human knowledge, including religious knowledge. They found common ground in their insistence upon the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and the testimony of the Bible to this revelation, and they found equal common meeting in their insistence upon the inability of man to make any claim for himself as he stood before the sovereign God.[1] While this movement was later to be split as the theological positions of the various participants matured, it was within this exciting context of new theological paths to be explored that Friedrich Gogarten found himself.

---

[1] Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief*, Aufl. 2 (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1921), see English translation, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. E. C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933).

[2] Friedrich Gogarten, *Die religiöse Entscheidung* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1921).

[3] Emil Brunner, *Erlebnis, Erkenntnis und Glaube* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1923).

[4] Eduard Thurneysen, *Dostoevsky*, trans. Keith R. Crim (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1964.

[5] The journal took its title from an article written by Gogarten under the same title and published in *Christliche Welt*, 34. Jg. 1920, No. 24, pp. 374-378.

[6] Note Bonhoeffer's rejection of this premise in the preceding chapter.

Approximately three years prior to the founding of the journal, Zwischen den Zeiten, Gogarten had created comment in German theological circles with a paper which he read before the annual convocation of the Friends of the Christliche Welt at Wartburg Castle. The Zeitgeist of Germany had found its expression in Oswald Spengler's The Decline of the West. Gogarten entitled his paper "Die Krisis unserer Kultur."[2] Gogarten argued that whereas "liberalism" had sought to find an anchor within man's interior life in the midst of the storm of cultural crisis, this is hardly in accord with the biblical perspective where a crisis confronts, not simply a facet or facets of culture, but, the whole man. The crisis of culture is therefore not limited to a cultural definition. The crisis of western civilization is actually the crisis of the judgment of God. Gogarten was not seeking some easy answer to comfort Christians who found themselves faced with this deep crisis. He rather intensified their concern by uncovering the real nature of the crisis. The crisis was God's No upon not only the so-called secular aspects of culture, but also upon religion, and, indeed, the Christian religion in particular. This No, however, is dialectical in that it must be said in order to make preparation for God's Yes. "Freilich, dieses Gericht zum Tod ist der Eingang zum Leben."[1] This does not mean, however, that the Yes of God is the end of crisis. That, too, would be undialectical. The crisis of faith which is fundamental is always that crisis wherein man realizes that he cannot create or re-create himself, but he must always stand in emptiness before the sovereign God who is Creator.

---

[1] For an excellent historical treatment of the dialectical movement, see H. Bouillard, "Dialektische Theologie," in Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, Band 3, 334ff.

[2] Gogarten, "Die Krisis unserer Kultur," Christliche Welt, 34. Jg. 1920, No. 49, 770-777 and No. 50, 786-791. Reprinted in Anfänge der dialektischen Theologie, II, ed. Jürgen Moltmann (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1963), 101-121.

Already certain themes which would become characteristic in the dialectical movement are to be found in this early paper. Likewise, there are to be found themes which will in later development be given Gogarten's own peculiar stamp of identity. Gogarten's former professor, Ernst Troeltsch, responded with an article the title of which showed Troeltsch's own shocked disapproval.[2] This article prompted a rejoinder by Gogarten. Apparently in this exchange between the young theologian and his former master, the younger man had the last word![3] The very titles of the responses indicate the radical shift which was taking place in the German theological scene as the younger theologians endeavored to break away from the theological moorings of the previous generation.

That which was common to the neophyte theologians was their passionate concern to be theologians of the Word. The previous generation's theological endeavor, rooted as it had been in historical research as this was typified by men such as Ernst Troeltsch and Adolf von Harnack, had come to a seeming impasse. The historical studies of the liberal period of German theology, particularly as this culminated in the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, had revealed the relativity of historical fact. In response to this problem, the general procedure had been to hold that Christianity was the historical encasement of certain timeless truths or values. The historical garb was really of no consequence. The theological task was to separate the relative from the absolute, the husk from the kernel. It had been Ernst Troeltsch in 1911 who had declared at the beginning of his book on the historical significance of Jesus that Christianity "is a religious idea or principle." This being so, "there is no need for any historical work of salvation."[1] More specifically in reference to Jesus,

---

[1] *Ibid.*, 111.

[2] Ernst Troeltsch, "Ein Apfel vom Baume Kierkegaards," *Christliche Welt*, 35. Jg. 1921, No. 11, 186-189. Reprinted in *Anfänge der dialektischen Theologie*, II, 134-140.

[3] Gogarten, "Wider die romantische Theologie," *Christliche Welt*, 36. Jg. 1922, No. 27, 498-502; No. 29, 514-519. Reprinted in *Anfänge der dialektischen Theologie*, II, 140-153.

> . . . there is no inner necessity for an historical event, and from the outset there is no real need for the historical personality of Jesus and the saving work He accomplished.[2]

The summation of such a thesis Troeltsch explained:

> The historical facts served for illustrative rather than demonstrative purposes, and would, on that understanding, be given over to scientific criticism.[3]

A theology of the Word must either answer this historical impasse of the earlier period, or it must break its ties with the past as best it can and begin anew. If the option of beginning anew is taken, the question of history will nevertheless remain the pivotal question. A theology of the Word, in contrast to a theology of universal truths, must at the same time be a theology of history. Gogarten, as much as Barth or any other participant in the new dialectical movement, desired to be such a theologian of the Word. It is therefore necessary to understand how Gogarten addresses himself to this problem before one can understand his own unique approach to a theological understanding of the phenomenon of secularization. As Carl Michalson has pointed out, Gogarten's theology is developed "almost symphonically."[1] There are few theologians in the contemporary period who have composed a theological symphony with such a varied counterpoint issuing in such a tightly-knit harmony as has Gogarten. It is therefore imperative to have some understanding of the principal theme before proceeding to the derivative theme of secularization.

---

[1] Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Bedeutung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu für den Glauben* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1911), p. 6.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

A. The Word as History

It is not Gogarten's intention to frame a philosophy of history. Such an attempt is once removed from the reality of history itself. He is not concerned with developing a systematic treatise which can then be brought to the phenomenon of history and applied to it as a set of categories to be applied to an indeterminate subject matter. In essence this is what the older school of Troeltsch had attempted as a means of freeing itself from the bonds of historicism.

---

[1] Carl Michalson in the preface to Gogarten's *The Reality of Faith* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 8.

History is rather an I-Thou encounter.[1] The only means of discussing the meaning and significance of history is to view history as an occurrence or encounter. Indeed, history is nothing less than such an encounter. It cannot be said that the Word of God comes into history; it must be said that the Word in its encounter with man creates history. How, then, is this so?

1. The Meaning of the Word

The common-place understanding of "word" is that "word" is a verbal representation of an object to which it refers. Since the time of Rene Descartes philosophy and theology have been caught in the dilemma of the subject-object dichotomy. In this dilemma "word" could only be that which refers to an object, and yet at the same time the "word" obviously cannot be identical with that to which it refers. Theology operating within the Cartesian and Kantian epistemological context has been aware that "word" and "reality" live in a symbiotic relationship, but it is precisely this relationship which has been problematic. Within the context of such objective thinking the "word" can only be treated as of secondary significance. It is simply a "sign."[1]

---

[1] In chapter IV of this dissertation the relationship between the I-Thou philosophy of Martin Buber and the theology of Karl Heim was treated. Gogarten stands within the same philosophical context, but it will be obvious throughout this chapter that his relationship to Buber and Grisebach is more basic even than Heim's relationship. Heim employed insights from this philosophical position to render possible a new understanding of transcendence. Gogarten, on the other hand, sees that the relationship is more integral. The insights of these philosophers are not imported from without, but Gogarten insists that the kind of existential-ontological relations which are central to the thought of these philosophers is precisely the understanding of history implicit within the biblical account itself. For a careful study of the significance of the I-Thou "personalism" for theology with references to the early work of Gogarten see John Cullberg, _Das Du und die Wirklichkeit: Zum ontologischen Hintergrund der Gemeinschaftskategorie_ (Uppsala: A. B. Lundeqvistska Bokhandeln, 1933).

Following the lines established by Buber and Grisebach Gogarten endeavors to show that the "word" is primary rather than a secondary response to "reality." In this primary (wesentlich) sense the "word" is "word" only when it is heard and responded to as such.[2] It is not primarily a "sign" but an expression of selfhood. "Word and selfhood are bound together in the most intimate of ways."[3] Gogarten, therefore, understands the "word" in this primary sense as a "self-speaking." It is obvious, then, that "word" in this primary sense occurs as encounter, i.e., as the I-Thou relationship. In this way the being of both the speaker and the hearer are constituted and comprehended. In this sense the "word" ceases to function as a "sign" pointing to reality, but the "word" is "reality." This "reality" is what Gogarten understands as history.

> Wherever the word . . . is spoken and heard, at that point man and his existence have meaning only in his being related to the other in such a way that his being in its entirety is constituted through the other in unconditional responsibility to the other.[4]

What Gogarten has attempted to achieve, as Buber and Grisebach before him had also attempted, is to transcend the plaguing subject-object dichotomy by considering the "word" as "encounter" in the context of relationship which cannot be objectified. In such a relationship of mutuality the "word" does not communicate objective content but rather the being of the speaker to the hearer. "Wherever this word is spoken or heard, there is present for man nothing more nor less than man."[1] "In the being spoken and being heard of this word, human existence occurs."[2]

---

[1] Gogarten, Die Kirche in der Welt (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1948), p. 91.
[2] Gogarten, Glaube und Wirklichkeit (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1928), p. 122f.
[3] Gogarten, Die Kirche in der Welt, p. 91.
[4] Gogarten, Glaube und Wirklichkeit, p. 123.

The only alternative to such an approach would be to consider man, and thereby history, as a being-in-himself, the result of which would be to understand the "word" as a "sign" or "symbol,"[3] or as the circumlocution of the inner voice of conscience.[4] In either case the use of the term is only figurative, i.e., in Gleichnisrede.

The Word of God does not address man in a propositional manner, but precisely in this kind of I-Thou encounter, wherein the Word constitutes man's own being, his existence. In any other manner the Word of God is objectified in such a way as to have purely a forensic relationship with man. Christian faith understands by God's Word this type of relationship in which the Word determines man's existence and lays a claim upon man in his very being. Gogarten insists that this is the understanding of the Reformers, particularly Luther, in their stress

---

1. Ibid.
2. Gogarten, Die Kirche in der Welt, p. 93.
3. Gogarten refers to this as an aesthetic understanding of the "word." See Gogarten, Glaube und Wirklichkeit, p. 125f.
4. Gogarten refers to this as the moralistic understanding of the word as practiced by Kant and his followers. See Gogarten, ibid.

upon

> address (Zuspruch) and claim (Anspruch) of God to man. For (the reformers) it is not information about God; nor is it information or a statement of generalized truth. Rather, in the most literal sense it is God's self-revelation (Selbstmitteilung); in his Word God gives himself (teilt sich selbst mit) to man.[1]

This indicates that a right understanding of the Word is at the same time a right understanding of existence and thereby a right understanding of history. In the light of this understanding all men must acknowledge (anerkennen) the Worthaftigkeit of their existence before God.

2. The Word of God and Existence

In this manner Gogarten understands that man's existence is called into being by the Word of God which addresses him and lays a claim upon him. Existence is therefore "wordly" (wortlich, worthaft). To express the meaning of existence in such a manner may seem strange, but the strangeness of this expression is instantly removed, Gogarten insists, when one says "responsible" (verantwortlich) instead of "wordly" (wortlich). Responsibility and the Worthaftigkeit of existence must be held in this close relation or else the common understanding of responsibility which isolates man's deeds from his being will be the result. This result is something less than a full understanding of man's existence for it is a kind of moralistic curtailment of a full understanding of man's existence.[1]

---

[1] Gogarten, "Wort Gottes und Schrift," Deutsche Theologie, Heft 7/8 (1936), p. 198.

> Just as it is only possible for an answer (Antwort) to be when a word (Wort) is spoken to me, in the same way responsibility (Verantwortung) is possible only where a word is spoken to me which calls from me not simply actions but myself, only where I am taken into the ever new creative event which brings about real human existence, which event is the word spoken to me with the being (Wesen) of the other and is heard by me with my being (Wesen).

Gogarten is here stressing the fact that existence is not prior to responsibility. The Wort which calls forth man's worthaftig existence is simultaneously man's Verantwortlichkeit to God. It is only in being spoken to and in hearing this word that human existence is possible.[3] It might, then, be said that human existence is characterized formally as "wordly" in that God's Word is the author of existence, and it can be characterized in content in terms of Verantwortlichkeit, man's responsibility before God.

The verantwortlich character of existence reveals also that existence is nothing other than decision. Before the Word of God which calls true existence into being man has two alternatives. In the first instance, he may choose to respond to the Word through an acknowledgment (Anerkennung) in his whole being of his Worthaftigkeit before God. In this acknowledgment (Anerkennung) man is genuinely man. From this response he has decided for the source of his being, namely, God. In this decision man understands his existence for what it truly is, a being-for-God. On the other hand, he may refuse to understand his

---

1. Gogarten, *Die Kirche in der Welt*, p. 92.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
3. *Ibid.*

existence in this manner and therefore choose to belong to himself.[1] Gogarten understands the former as the true stance of faith. In the latter choice man denies his *Worthaftigkeit* and therefore dwells in sin and disobedience.

If the latter alternative is chosen, the result is a perversion of existence in radical depth. If man receives his true existence from the "wordly" encounter with God, then the logical consequence of refusal to accept one's *Worthaftigkeit* is that one's entire being is affected by this choice for disobedience. Man is therefore forced to live upon his own resources, and the consequence is an evasion of God. The tragedy of this is seen in that God's Word to man, which is both a call and a claim, is now separated, and man knows only the latter, the responsibility without the creative Word. As Gogarten develops this theme in one of his later works,[2] man in this situation chooses to live under the curse of the law instead of the promise of the Gospel. When the Word is severed in this act of free decision, man's own existence is likewise severed. Gogarten speaks of the duality (*Zweiheitlichkeit*) of human existence. By this he means the duality of the I-Thou character of human existence. In the free but

---

1. It must be understood that in this connection Gogarten makes a clear distinction between "personality" and "person." Personality is the formal structure which man as man possesses. Personhood is the authentic existence which is man's being in relationship. This distinction is frequently passed over in critiques of Gogarten. See, for example, Regin Prenter's review, "Das Evangelium der Säkularisierung," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, 12 Jg., 1956, 605ff.
2. Gogarten, *Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt*, 3. Aufl. (Stuttgart: Friedrich Vorwerk Verlag, 1956).

disobedient act of decision wherein man chooses himself, i.e., his "I" without the "Thou," this duality is sundered. This, for Gogarten, amounts to a new kind of ontological definition of sin.[1] To translate this into Gogarten's concern for a right understanding of the historical nature of faith, to accept one's responsibility before God is to accept one's true history; to choose the "I" without the "Thou" is to fall into the "fateful darkness" of a history which man creates himself. Gogarten explains:

> We must now . . . distinguish two possibilities within this deficient mode. One would be that of "the gentiles," the secularistic interpretation of history. Among the gentiles the future in the sense of the imminent Advent is hidden absolutely by the belief in a closed system of world history . . . . In recent secularistic thought of history, as we have observed, the imminent Advent of God is changed into the idea of a better world brought about by the help of human progress. . . .In contrast to history as experienced by faith, the future here remains in fateful darkness where indeed searching questions continue to arise as to "the total form of life," but always without a decisive unreserved exposure of oneself to the future in which both the beginning and end of our total destiny come to pass.[2]

B. Creation as History

Nowhere does Gogarten's new and radical approach to an understanding of history appear more obvious than in his consideration of the Christian doctrine of creation. Within the scope of

---

[1] For a clear statement of Gogarten's understanding of this duality of existence see Roland Wagler, Der Ort der Ethik bei Friedrich Gogarten (Hamburg: Herbert Reich Evangelischer Verlag, 1961), pp. 8-31.

[2] Gogarten, "The Unity of History," Theology Today, XV, No. 2, July 1958, 207.

Christian thought it has been at the point of the doctrine of creation where the categories of nature, in contrast to the categories of history, have had singular prominence. Likewise, as this exposition of Gogarten's theology moves from a consideration of the Word and the determination of existence to a consideration of creation, the focus of the particular problem of secularization becomes clearer. The progression of this analysis is to move in concentric circles closer and closer to the specific question of the historical phenomenon of secularization. The "wordly" character of existence and history leads to the question of a new understanding of creation and with this new understanding the stage is set for a consideration of Gogarten's particular treatment of secularization.

As background it would be well to summarize what is generally understood by creation as interpreted through the categories of nature. Gogarten at times refers to this as a metaphysical interpretation which is linked with what he calls a "supernatural understanding of faith."[1] The Christian doctrine of creation as interpreted through the categories of nature views the "world" as a physical object or a nexus of physical objects which are subject to quantitative measurement through the means of technical instruments. Accordingly, the "God" of this "world" is viewed as the cause behind the entire physical process. He is the God of the Greek attributes of omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence. This is the God who is not only separate from man, but

---

[1] See Gogarten, Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt, pp. 134-139. Also see Gogarten, The Reality of Faith, trans. Carl Michalson and others (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), pp. 9-26.

He is the object beyond man who works "upon" man and the physical world. In such a context creation is an act of this omniscient and omnipotent God at the beginning of time. Creation is, therefore, measured in temporal, quantitative terms in the same manner as the world is measured in technical, quantitative terms.[1] This is precisely the kind of objectification of thought which denies the possibility of a truly historical understanding of man's existence as characterized by his *Worthaftigkeit* and his *Verantwortlichkeit* before God. Another way of expressing the meaning of existence must be discovered. To this task Gogarten sets himself.

1. The Twofold Nature of Belief in Creation

Gogarten claims that the typically Greek manner of thinking regarding the cosmos is objectionable because this manner of thought by employing of the categories of nature objectifies the world by capturing it in a hypothesis. For Christian thinking this is not permissible, for it is in reality an attempt to cross over the absolute dividing line between the Creator and his creation.[2] It is an expression on the part of man refusing his creaturely existence and trying to extend himself into the being of the Creator.

---

[1] Carl Michalson has sought to delineate this manner of conceptualizing the world and has criticized it from exactly the same perspective as Gogarten. See Carl Michalson, *The Rationality of Faith* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), pp. 42-43. In this work Michalson has attempted to follow through Gogarten's program and has sought to treat the various doctrines, such as creation, from a purely historical point of view in contrast to a point of view employing the categories of nature.

[2] Gogarten, *Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt*, pp. 134-139.

> . . . it implies man's desire to be like God. Creation, therefore, is never to be understood in this manner; one cannot recognize (erkennen) God the Creator; . . . rather, one can only acknowledge (anerkennen) him. This creation one can only believe.[1]

The two verbs in this passage, erkennen and anerkennen, play pivotal roles in Gogarten's understanding of belief in creation. The twofold nature of belief in creation involves one's acknowledgment of God as Creator and, at the same time, recognizing one's self as a creature before God. This dual nature of understanding belief in creation has been mistreated and corrupted in so-called Greek, objectifying thought. When God and the creation are so objectified, man and his existence as creature are ignored. The dual nature of belief must never be bifurcated in such a way. The two aspects must be held in inseparable relation. This close and inseparable relation, erkennen and anerkennen, serves to underscore a basic conviction of Gogarten: man can never know God apart from knowing himself in the same instance. Knowledge of God and knowledge of man are inseparable. As existence cannot be understood apart from the Word, so creation cannot and must not be understood apart from existence. Gogarten unmistakably draws this conclusion:

> The existence which God gives me in covenanting himself to me through his Word is nothing more nor less than my existence. It is my existence in the fundamental and entire sense which we mean when we speak of creation.[2]

---

1. Gogarten, Ich glaube an den dreieinigen Gott (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1928), p. 44.
2. Gogarten, "Wort Gottes und Schrift," p. 199.

2. Creation as Temporal

It is only by understanding one's existence as called into being by the Word of God that one comes to have a proper understanding of his existence as creaturely. Existence is, therefore, creation. Only in such an understanding is full justice done to man as a historical being. After all, existence and creation are, for Gogarten, purely historical. In this sense, then, Gogarten seeks to avoid the spatial categories which have generally characterized the Christian doctrine of creation in the predominantly Greek-thinking west. Instead of spatial categories, Gogarten endeavors to understand creation temporally. Such traditional phrases as "in the beginning" come to have meaning for man only when he understands time as *his* time and not as some remote point upon a time continuum.

To insist upon interpreting creation and its beginning in terms of some mythical beginning-point is to miss the unique character of creation, i.e., its *Einmaligkeit*, its once-for-all-ness. Time never becomes man's own time until in the concrete moment of decision man understands his existence as *Worthaftigkeit*. It is only in this encounter that time becomes one's own time. It is only in this sense that time has the character of *Einmaligkeit*. When time is one's own time, one recognizes that creation is one's own particular creation, and, hence, history is one's own particular history.

It is quite obvious that every moment of man's existence does not have this *einmalig* character. What gives this uniqueness to certain moments of time? That which makes any moment a unique and once-for-all time is the recognition of God's claim upon man and man's response to that claim. If man does not recognize this, which Gogarten calls _Verbindlichkeit_, limitation, i.e., that time is unique only in the sense of this responsive encounter, then time and history can never be decisive for man.

> When the Christian faith confesses that in the beginning God made heaven and earth, the meaning of this "in the beginning" comes not from a mythical primeval beginning -- for that would be nothing more than the broad, absolutely non-binding idea that a divine being made the world "before all time" -- but rather, this "in the beginning" has its meaning from the temporal reality of my life through the fact that a beginning, a compelling (binding) beginning, happens in my life from which this "in the beginning" allows itself to be recognized.

Belief in creation is, then, not a propositional belief; it is not belief in some theory of the origin of the world. It is a beliefful participation in a temporal event wherein one's response to the Word of God at the same time gives one his existence, his creation, his history. It is not in the sense of some locatable time point of which the biblical doctrine of creation speaks, but it is rather the affirmation that in the _einmalig_ moment of encounter God gives to man the world of creaturely existence for which man is to be responsible before God, and in this way man can be said to have a history.

Behind this line of reasoning, on the part of Gogarten, stands another factor which should become obvious at this point. It might easily be concluded that the address of the Word of God to man which

---

1. Gogarten, _Ich glaube an den dreieinigen Gott_, p. 48.

constitutes man's existence is a Word from some transhistorical realm. This kind of thinking Gogarten would reject as a continuation of a regrettable form of metaphysical thinking.[1] The Word of God addresses man in the Word which became flesh, i.e., the Word which became history. The Word addresses man through history, not from beyond history. Man's relationship to his Creator is therefore not dialectical in the sense in which theological thought molded by Greek metaphysical and spatial modes has generally held. Man receives his existence from God as God's Word encounters man historically within man's own concrete historical situation. Gogarten, therefore, insists, "Only in faith in Jesus Christ am I able to believe in God the Creator."[2] It is when man's relationship with God is conceived in a metaphysical, spatial, supernatural manner that this relationship is dialectical. This is a misplacement of the dialectic. To hold to a dialectical relationship between God and the world is to presuppose a fundamental unity between Creator and creation. This is clearly not the biblical perspective. It is man's existence which is dialectical.[3] God's Word encounters man, not transhistorically, but, historically. Man's responsibility, therefore, before God is simultaneously a responsibility for the world.

Against the earlier outlined Greek metaphysical conception of the world and creation, Gogarten has set forth a new and radical historical interpretation of creation. Instead of the God of the Greek attributes of omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence, Gogarten has stressed the God who speaks his Word in Jesus Christ historically. Gogarten sees Luther supporting this precise historical understanding of God and his Word. Luther clearly stated that the omnipotence of God is not a category of nature, for it does not mean that God can do _anything_. The omnipotence of God is a category of grace for Luther, and, thereby, he sees that God's deeds are actually his Word in and through history.[1] Creation is, therefore, not an event at some remote time before the time of man, but the meaning of creation is man's discovery of his creatureliness in the _einmalig_ moment of encounter with the Word in history. It is this encounter which gives man a _history_ instead of a _nature_. The world is not the nexus of physical objects which confronts man, but it becomes in Gogarten's interpretation the point where man's life is constituted as a responsible existence for the world, i.e., for the neighbor, before God. What Gogarten has attempted to achieve is an interpretation of man, world, creation and God as temporal rather than spatial, as historical rather than metaphysical.

---

[1] Gogarten, *The Reality of Faith*, pp. 9-26.

[2] Gogarten, *Ich glaube an den dreieinigen Gott*, p. 205.

[3] See Gogarten's statement, "Dialektik ist nur da möglich, we es in der Zweiheit eine Einheit und in der Einheit eine Zweiheit gibt." Gogarten, *Ich glaube an den dreieinigen Gott*, p. 55.

3. Faith as History

It should become clear at this point how Gogarten intends that faith be understood. As a general rule faith in the creation has been an expressed attempt on the part of man to secure a knowledge of the world, which supposedly only the faithful man can secure, and which he can thereby use to make himself secure in the world. This is seen when man endeavors to obtain additional knowledge of the physical creation through faith to supplement his natural knowledge. One might call this a "propositional" understanding of faith. In contrast to such an understanding of faith, Gogarten insists that faith must be understood historically. The older supernatural or metaphysical understanding of faith was caught in the bind of the subject-object dichotomy. In this earlier way of thinking of faith God was the object who is transcendent of history but invades history from without to reveal himself. Faith, therefore, was man's subjective response to this objective historical act.[1] What happens in such a concept of faith is that history and faith are no longer viewed as being integrally related. History is independent of faith, and faith is correspondingly understood in the manner of medieval theology as _notitia_ with _assensus_ added. What has happened in this view is that the I-Thou encounter character of faith has been destroyed. Faith has become faith _in_ history, instead of faith itself being historical. The _einmalig_ character of time has been frozen in some past historical event. This past historical event, however, is powerless to elicit a _verantwortlich_ response from man.

---

[1] Gogarten's commentary on a passage from Luther's _The Bondage of the Will_ in Gogarten, _Die Verkündigung Jesu Christi_ (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1948), p. 531.

In this older view of faith and history, faith is degraded into a type of super-epistemological category which man exercises when he is at the end of his natural knowledge. In contrast to this, Gogarten

---

1. Gogarten, _Demythologizing and History_, trans. N. H. Smith (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), p. 51.

insists that faith is an event which takes place immediately between God and man through the Word. Faith is, therefore, that encounter with the Word in history which gives man his history, his existence, his recognition of creatureliness. As Gogarten interprets Paul in Galatians 4:9, faith is

> the knowledge that occurs when man is known of God. Whatever happens in this awareness or in this knowledge is the reality with which faith is concerned, no more and no less. And this reality is the reality of God.[1]

In this sense faith is that which brings about a new self-understanding.

This new self-understanding is of a dual nature in that man recognizes his existence as a gift from God and his responsibility as a responsibility for the world, i.e., for the concrete thou of the neighbor. In this context Gogarten can say that the decision of faith is actually the decision: "I or thou?"[2] It is one's willingness to receive his existence from God and to live that existence responsibly for the neighbor. Faith must be precisely this concrete, for conceived in any other manner, it will be mere speculation. Man will lose himself in speculation, the "I" is separated from the "Thou," and in essence man chooses himself. Again, Gogarten would insist that this is "bad faith" or sin.

---

[1] Gogarten, The Reality of Faith, p. 110.

[2] Gogarten, Ich glaube an den dreieinigen Gott, p. 60. Maurice S. Friedman is critical of Gogarten's separation of the I from the thou in this context. This separation of the I from the thou, suggests Friedman, is to misunderstand the "true basis of the I-Thou philosophy," "for reality is not within each of the two individuals in a relationship. . . . but between them." See Friedman, Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 273. One must inquire if Friedman has correctly understood Gogarten in this case. After all, is this not what Gogarten is arguing against, namely, the separation of the two? How else is one to understand Gogarten's persistent insistence that existence is encounter, relationship, and that sin is the sundering of the "I" from the "Thou"?

C. Faith as a New Historical Understanding

This new self-understanding of man in terms of faith as history must now be explored. In 1933 Gerhard Krüger wrote a highly significant essay on the emerging new self-understanding in philosophy.[1] In this essay Krüger contrasted the classical and modern periods of philosophy regarding their respective understandings of man and his relationship to the world. The classical period had sought to locate man within the world and to ask questions about him in a detached, objectifying manner. The modern period, however, discovered man, himself, as the "questioner."[2] It was the modern period which began to reflect upon man as man. Krüger called this the arrival of the period of self-consciousness. What this has to do with theology is that Krüger claimed to find in the Christian faith the origin of this new self-consciousness in the Christian's posture of "complete powerlessness. . . impotence . . . before God."[3]

Gogarten senses the tremendous importance which this insight has for Christian theology, particularly for an understanding of faith as a new self-understanding or self-consciousness. The conclusion to be drawn from Krüger's essay, and this conclusion Gogarten welcomed, was that the presupposition of God's reality and revelation is the believing man. It is on this premise that Gogarten erects his Christian anthropology, a theological project for which Barth had strongly castigated Gogarten.[1] The fundamental starting point for a Christian understanding of man is for Gogarten precisely man's experience of his impotence before God in faith, and this is the presupposition of everything which man subsequently believes.

---

[1] Gerhard Krüger, "Die Herkunft des philosophischen Selbstbewusstseins," Logos, Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie der Kultur, XXXII (1933), 225ff. Gogarten draws attention to this essay in The Reality of Faith, pp. 34-36.

[2] Krüger, ibid., p. 226.

[3] Ibid., p. 229.

Gogarten sees that this experience of impotence is characterized by the fact that man recognizes that he receives his entire existence from God. Secondly, the man who experiences this impotence before God is man in his totality. This is not simply a moral experience nor simply a *mysterium tremendum*. It is the whole man who stands before God in impotence. Gogarten concludes that through this experience man comes to himself in an authentic sense. Man has experienced the power which calls him into being. These discoveries are not additions to faith. This threefold discovery is actually faith itself. This is consistent with Gogarten's earlier statements that man received his being in the encounter with the Word of God. This gift of being or self-consciousness can never be grounded in man, but it is uniquely grounded in the call in which man knows that he is called.[2] This delivers faith, and therefore authentic existence, from any kind of static nature. Faith is hearing the Word or call which is a dynamic situation always necessitating renewal. What, then, are the implications of this new self-understanding of faith?

---

[1] See Barth's criticisms of Gogarten's call for a theological anthropology in Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I, 1, pp. 143-149.

[2] See Gogarten, *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit*, 2. Aufl. (Stuttgart: Friedrich Vorwerk Verlag, 1958), pp. 84, 91, 94.

1. Faith as Freedom from the World

Faith is a new relation to the world. The pre-Christian man was pre-eminently concerned with the world. He was passionately concerned to discover its order, and through this discovery to find his security or salvation. He, therefore, was bound in awe of the cosmos and to the powers which he conceived to give the cosmos order. The Christian man experiences a demythologizing of this binding relationship to the world. In faith the Christian is freed from the world. No longer for him is the world a religious reality requiring his worship and veneration. Gogarten sees that the intention of Paul was to express this very freedom from the world when he warned the Roman Christian believers not to be conformed to the world (Romans 12:2).[1] This is, likewise, Paul's intention when he confesses that through Christ the world has been crucified to him and he to the world (Galatians 6:14).[2] In short, this new freedom has been made possible through Jesus Christ. The Christian *metanoia* is this new self-understanding as freedom from the world. This is unique for the Christian, for the Jew as well as the Gentile experienced this freedom on becoming believers. The Jews as well as the Gentiles had their false gods and their legalisms. Both groups equally stood condemned for having exchanged the creature for the Creator. They were both in bondage to the "elemental powers of the universe."

---

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 91-94. Cf. Gogarten, *Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt*, p. 409.

[2] Gogarten, *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit*, pp. 25-26. See also, Gogarten, *Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt*, pp. 134-139.

Gogarten is careful to distinguish this Christian freedom from the world and to show that in Christian faith it should not lead to a world-denial. Such world-denial is to be found in Hellenistic Gnosticism in pronounced fashion.[1] In fact the New Testament at times seems to speak this same language when it distinguishes the two kinds of worlds and the two kinds of aeons. While the New Testament writers may have made use of Gnostic terminology, their use of this terminology was radically different from the Gnostics. Gogarten interprets the New Testament writers as being exclusively concerned with "man and his relation to God." On the other hand, the Gnostic writers were concerned with the world and man's unfortunate relationship to it. The Gnostic chooses to think in terms of cosmological mythology, and while the New Testament makes use of mythological structures, at the heart of the structure is always man receiving his being from God in relationship. When the New Testament writers, therefore, speak in a deprecatory manner of the world, they frequently refer to it as "this" world, and by this they mean the world of man's sin, not cosmic fate. For the New Testament writers there is only _one_ world. The so-called New Testament dualism is existential, not cosmological. Therefore, when the New Testament speaks of man as a creature of the "powers of darkness" and the "elemental spirits," it is underscoring the fact that man has chosen to understand himself from the standpoint of the world, instead of understanding himself as the creature before his Creator.

---

[1] See Hans Jonas, _Gnosis und antiker Geist_ (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1934). Gogarten makes extensive use of this treatment of Gnosticism.

In the encounter with the Word in Jesus Christ man experiences a new freedom. His worldly existence is in this encounter demythologized. He is freed from the world.

2. The Threefold Aspect of Freedom

The freedom which man experiences in the Christian faith is a freedom from the world which releases him for a non-compulsive relationship with God. In this new explication of Christian freedom Gogarten sees himself continuing the task already established for theology by Luther.[1] In the doctrine of Christian freedom Gogarten sees three necessary aspects.

First, the being of man is received from God in a relational freedom, and man can never know the "new being" or authenticity apart from this freedom.

> Freedom is not merely like a faculty that is accidental to his essence. In this freedom man is himself. Therefore, in it man has his being as a grant from God. Indeed, he has it in the sense that in this freedom he belongs to God as one who is "by God, in the sight of God" (II Cor. 2:17). This freedom, therefore, is no more his own work than his own being is. Man is so originally in freedom that it is his authentic being. In it everything else that may be said about man has its meaning. If he loses his freedom, he loses himself.[2]

---

[1] See Gogarten's discussion of Luther's doctrine of Christian freedom in Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt, pp. 80-120.

[2] Gogarten, The Reality of Faith, p. 50.

Gogarten is here insisting that man can be fulfilled only when he finds the being to which he responds. Gogarten speaks here of response in the sense of the Latin, spondere, "to pledge one's word." One's word is one's self, and, therefore, Gogarten again repeats his earlier theme that man has his being only as he responds to one who addresses him. The God who addresses man does so as man's Father.

When Paul discusses Christian freedom he does so in the context of father-son relationship. The freedom of man for God is the freedom of a son (Romans 8:15),[1] or at times Paul speaks of this simply as "sonship" (Galatians 4:5).[2]

> In this freedom as son, he (man) has a share in the being of the father and he receives his being-as-son from the father's being-as-father.[3]

Man has his freedom only as a son, and this means that man's being as son is grounded in God's being as Father.

The second aspect of Christian freedom is very simply that this freedom cannot be man's unless man has knowledge of the One for whom he is free. This knowledge is possible only in encounter with the One who gives man his being. Therefore, Christian freedom is not to be equated with a psychological understanding of free will or free decision. Freedom in the Christian sense means being opened and revealed to another person. Knowledge of God can be had only in response to his call. For this reason, Gogarten rejects any form of natural

---

1. Gogarten, Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt, pp. 341-342.
2. Gogarten, The Reality of Faith, p. 51.
3. Ibid.

theology[1] for this would be a clinging to the world and would subject man to the world. Any other attempt to gain knowledge of God than through response to his Word would be dangerously enslaving and idle speculation.

> A knowledge of God would be a knowledge in which I genuinely do justice to him and to the calling with which he calls me out of nothing into being, and to which I respond with my very being. Such knowledge is possible only as I know myself free for him in the freedom that I receive as given to me by him.[2]

Finally, Christian freedom is the freedom of a son who has become an heir of God (Romans 8:17 and Galatians 4:1).[3] If man shares in the inheritance of Christ, what, then, is this inheritance? The inheritance of Christ is the world for which he was obedient unto death. Therefore, as a free son of the Father man participates in the inheritance which is Christ's. The man of faith who is free from the world is at the same moment given that world as an inheritance, which means that he is set free to rule the world in fulfillment of the injunction of Genesis 5:28: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

---

[1] Barth, however, finds in Gogarten a natural theology. "The nature and purpose of all natural theology has always been to analyse man in the light of a revelation of God starting with creation, as the introitus to the inner circle of real theology, based upon revelatio specialis. . . . how far is the nature and purpose of Gogarten's 'proper anthropology,' not, according to all he has said about it, to be identified with the nature and purpose of all natural theology?" Barth, Church Dogmatics, I, 1, p. 147.

[2] Gogarten, The Reality of Faith, p. 53.

[3] Gogarten makes repeated references to these passages. In fact, one might say that they are pivotal for his whole treatment of secularization. See Gogarten, Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt, pp. 13, 24, 189, 294, 313, 330, 373, 386. See also Gogarten, Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit, pp. 51-53, 74-77, 123, 159, where the concept of inheritance is more directly related to the process of secularization.

It is only when man is freed from the world that he can be responsible for it and rule it. Pre-Christian man could not rule but could only serve the world as its slave. Through faith which is at the same time freedom man receives his being as a son and heir, and in this encounter his relationship to the world is fundamentally changed.

3. The World as an Inheritance

Because the Christian has inherited the world as a son through the Sonship of Jesus Christ, the Christian is called to live a life of maturity in the world, i.e., he is called to be the master of the world rather than its slave. This mastery over the world is possible only when man has an independence of the world, when he no longer worships the world. This is the freedom of sonship for only in this freedom is man able to respond to God as his Father.

The freedom of sonship is possible only because this sonship is received, not earned nor created, from the Father. This would not be real sonship if man, the son, were not independent. The true mature son has ceased to be a child and, therefore, lives in the conditions of true freedom, a freedom from slavery to the world which is at the same time a freedom to exercise dominion over the world. This is what is implied when Gogarten announces that man has inherited the world at the moment when he understands himself as a son of the Father.

> For in order to be able to respond to another in the proper sense, that is, with one's own genuine promise, he must have a world of his own. He must be independently and responsibly engaged with it as one who holds and justifies his own being. In this independence in which the filial freedom for God is possible, the full meaning of the inheritance becomes understandable for the first time as a world turned over to man.[1]

The Word which calls man to sonship is not simply and exclusively a Word giving him a new relationship to the world, but it is also a Word giving him a new relationship to God. That which is given as a gift, i.e., the world, remains genuinely the world only as the relationship with the Father is vital and present. The world is given to man as a trust, and, therefore, man must recognize and safeguard the presence of Him who gives the inheritance. Man's freedom from the world and his responsibility of dominion over the world are realities only within the context of man's owning God as Creator and Father.[2] Indeed, the world can be the world only if man "clearly perceives" through it the "invisible nature, namely, his (God's) eternal power and deity" (Romans 1:20). This "eternal power and deity" man perceives only when he receives his existence, his history, his freedom in the *Worthaftigkeit* relationship of God's Word. Larry E. Shiner summarizes Gogarten's point:

---

[1] Gogarten, *The Reality of Faith*, p. 55. See also Gogarten's remark in *Der Mensch zwsichen Gott und Welt*, p. 15: "Dieser Ruf zur Freiheit der Sohnschaft ist zugleich der Aufruf an Menschen, sich von der Welt zu lösen."

[2] Gogarten, *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit*, pp. 67-68.

> In Jesus man receives a twofold freedom: a freedom for God and a freedom from the world. The two cannot be separated in Christian faith. This is why freedom from the world is no moralistic "unworldliness" or asceticism. It is the freedom of one who has been given responsibility for the world as a heritage. The world is man's garden. He is to choose what to plant and how to cultivate. Yet though he is fully responsible for it, he is always aware it has been entrusted to him by God. In Christ, man is responsible _to_ God and _for_ the world.[1]

The question of God's relation to the world is answered for Gogarten in this concept of the "son's inheritance." In man's perceiving the Creatorhood and Fatherhood of God he comes to understand God's relation to the world. Creatorhood and Fatherhood are terms closely tied with each other. The Creator's relation to the world is through the Father's relation to man. In essence God's Creatorhood is actually the bestowal of sonship on man, making man responsible before God for the world. In this sense the two sides of the son's inheritance are to be seen: it is a freedom from the world while at the same moment it is a demand to be responsible for the world; it is an independence for man before God while at the same moment it is a freedom for the Father.

4. Freedom from the Law

A discussion of the doctrine of Christian freedom is not complete without a full consideration of the relation of freedom to the law. The Apostle Paul insisted that the Christian man is free from the law. In what sense is man free from the law? Gogarten sees an integral link between man's freedom as son with man's freedom from the law. Indeed, the latter freedom is grounded in the former reality. The man "in Christ" is the man who is free from the powers of the world which demand his worship, and he is free because the love of God in Christ has accomplished this freedom for him. In this sense it can be seen that the concept of the law is closely bound up with the concept of the world.

---

[1] Larry E. Shiner, "Secular Man," _Motive_, XXII, No. 8 (May 1962), p. 17.

Gogarten sees that Paul's concept of the law is twofold. The first aspect of the law Paul connects with the bondage of man to the world. This bondage has already been seen to be man's subjugation to the "elemental powers" (*stoicheia*) which were the gods, demons, and other powers which pre-Christian man worshiped because he felt they gave order to the cosmos. This is the "piety of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews."[1] In this legalistic piety both Gentiles and Jews are under the law and therefore under sin (Romans 3:9). From this bondage God's Word in Christ has set man free.[2]

The law, on the other hand, is also the eternal will of God which is binding upon man's total involvements in life. In this sense, the law can be seen as the "custodian" to Christ (Galatians 3:24).[3] "Before faith came" (Galatians 3:23) this law drove man to worship the creature rather than the Creator. The law caused man to immerse himself in the world, and thereby to lose himself. This Gogarten calls original sin.[4] While man has been set free from sin, from the law, and from the world, this should in no sense imply that the world is identical with sin or that the law stands over against the Creator.

---

[1] Gogarten, *The Reality of Faith*, p. 71.

[2] Gogarten, *Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt*, pp. 77-78.

[3] Gogarten, *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit*, p. 77.

[4] Gogarten, *The Reality of Faith*, p. 71.

If the world and law stand over against the Creator this is because man has fallen in worship of these. The world and law are given by God and are not opposed to Him; only man's mistaken relation to the world and law is opposed to God. Paul was careful not to identify the law with sin. The law might cause sin, but it was not sin. To the man outside of faith this might sound like a blatant contradiction. It is paradoxical, to say the least, when Paul speaks of the law as being holy, right, and good. How are these two aspects of the law to be reconciled?

> Consequently it is not the case that the negative statements of the "law" are valid for the law only in so far as it meets man in the world. Nor is it the case that the positive statements of the "law" are valid for the law only in so far as it is the eternal will of God. Rather, all the statements are valid with all their contradictions, here as well as there. A solution is possible only in the freedom for God which comes to us in faith and can be assured only by that faith.[1]

Gogarten, with Paul, will not have the law in the negative sense alone, but it must be had in the fullest sense which comprises both the negative and positive aspects together. The law has two sides in the same manner as man's freedom is twofold. On the one hand, man is freed from the world in order to receive it as an inheritance. On the other hand, man is responsible before God for this inheritance, and this implies that man in faith is still a man who must produce "works."

It is a very subtle manner in which Gogarten looks at this coherence between faith and works. He holds that the degree of determination of the works by faith is of "a very peculiar nature." One does not come to know (*kennen*) the works which he must do through faith, neither has faith the function to grant *power*, i.e., to accomplish them. Gogarten interprets Paul to this effect: Not the "what" of the works depends on faith, neither *that* they are done, but only *how* they are done and *how* they are not done. For example, the rules for the conduct of life to be found in the New Testament are not specifically Christian. The majority of them come from the Stoa. The peculiarity of the New Testament ethical prescriptions is not in their content but in their connection with the admonition to faith. The Christian is free from the bondage and tyranny of the law, but he is still a creature who performs works within the world for this is a part of his freedom of responsibility before the Creator.[1]

---

[1] Gogarten, ibid., p. 73.

Gogarten insists that there is a knowledge which is granted with the freedom of sonship enabling the Christian to discriminate regarding the manner in which works are done. This discriminatory knowledge is rooted in man's reason. Paul fully expected this exercise of discrimination when the legalistic heresies confronted the Galatian church. Possessing this knowledge to discriminate the Christian is free from Jewish legalistic piety. He knows that faith in the law is at the same moment faith in the world, and this does not lead to salvation. The Christian is, therefore, master of the law in that he has a higher criterion over all the laws of the world. This higher criterion, or "what is excellent," is the law of love.

---

[1] Gogarten, *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit*, p. 82.

> Governed by this criterion, one will think about "whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and gracious, if there is any virtue, anything worthy of praise" (Phil. 4:8). The most remarkable thing about this list is that the apostle "obviously uses concepts of popular moral philosophy" in order to express his meaning as to what is obligatory and valid for the Christian in the law. What corresponds to the will of God as he encounters man in the law is "the good, acceptable, and perfect" and that is not a particularly Christian criterion of action. The same act is proper to men in civic life.[1]

This matter of practical discrimination Paul assumes, so Gogarten claims, man can know with the aid of his reason. This means that the law in its individual commandments, in the *dies und jenes*, of its demands, is given to man's disposal over himself, i.e., in this case to his intellect, to his reason, to his *Vernunft*.[2] This reason all men exercise in deciding from day to day what shall be done and what will be left undone. Faith does not grant the power to perform these tasks; these are the tasks of man as man. So, consequently, freedom from the law does not mean at all that one should not care for the law any more. It belongs to the creation, and the creation has to be kept going with the aid of the law. This does not mean, therefore, that man can build up his own righteousness before God through the law. That righteousness is a pure gift of grace. What is meant is that this is a freedom from the curse of the law. For the Christian man the law no longer increases sin, but the law becomes a law to life (zum Leben). The difference between the natural man and the Christian man is the how of the doing of these works. In short, all men are creatures of reason, and through this reason they order their affairs of life. This reason can manifest itself in a legalism; it can sacralize the world and lead man into bondage to the world. On the other hand, it can produce the "fruits of the spirit" through the man who knows that he has been delivered from the curse of the law.

---

[1] Gogarten, *The Reality of Faith*, pp. 75-76. The quotations within this quotation are taken by Gogarten from Martin Dibelius, *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Vol. II, 3. Aufl., p. 95.

[2] Gogarten, *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit*, p. 87.

D. The Secularization of the World

It is an undeniable fact that the modern world, in contrast with earlier sacral interpretations of itself, is in the process of radical secularization. Increasingly the world chooses to understand itself in terms of independence from all external authorities, of autonomy in terms of managing its affairs, and of a freedom which allows it to choose its own destiny. This process can be traced through the various eruptions of "enlightenment" from the Averroism of the medieval period to the Nominalism of the late Middle Ages, from the Renaissance and its new appreciation for the grandeur of man to the most recent advances in modern science. Throughout this process the essential element to be found is a secular attitude founded upon man's awareness of his freedom and independence. This is the man who in Bonhoeffer's terms has "come of age."[1]

The church with its theological expressions has directed its protests against this movement of secularization. The secular world has at many points acted hostilely to the church's attempt to maintain an aegis of the world, and the church has returned towards the world its own reaction of defensiveness and at times retreat.

---

[1] See chapter IV of this dissertation.

Carl Becker has described the spirit and results of this process of secularization in the eighteenth century, an attitude which continues to contemporary times:

> Edit and interpret the conclusions of modern science as tenderly as we like, it is still quite impossible for us to regard man as the child of God for whom the earth was created as a temporary habitation. . . . Unparented, unassisted and undirected by omniscient or benevolent authority, he must fend for himself, and with the aid of his own limited intelligence find his way about in an indifferent universe.[1]

In the preceding discussion of a new self-understanding through faith Gogarten has actually taken the predominant themes of secularization, i.e., independence, autonomy, and freedom, and has demonstrated, principally through Pauline exegesis, that these are the results of a proper Christian understanding of man in the world. The thesis stated concisely is that the origin of secularization is in the Christian faith itself.[2] In other words, the origin of secularization lies in the new understanding of history and existence as this understanding is made possible for man through faith.

---

[1] Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), pp. 14-15.

[2] The entirety of Gogarten's *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit*,as the subtitle, "Die Säkularisierung als theologisches Problem," implies, is a defense of this thesis.

1. The Christian Origin of Secularization

Whereas Bonhoeffer had welcomed the "man come of age" on the basis of a Christology the focus of which was an ontological identification of the world and Christ made possible through the Incarnation and Crucifixion, Gogarten welcomes the process of secularization by means of a new understanding of history which is a new understanding of man's relation to God and to the world. On the basis of the exposition of Gogarten's thought above, there remains to be demonstrated this rather unexpected relationship of Christian faith and secularization. It is unexpected in the light of the long range of Christian theology, but it can hardly be unexpected in terms of what Gogarten has already expounded.

This relationship of Christian faith to the process of secularization rests, first, upon what Gogarten has termed "man's freedom from the world." The man of faith understands his relationship to the world in a different light from the pre-Christian man. Pre-Christian man sacralized the world in order to give the cosmos order, and pre-Christian man, thereby, was immersed in the world. The world and its powers became his god. Through natural piety he became the servant of the world. The modern process of secularization reverses this understanding of the world. The world is no longer understood in the classical sense as being a sacralized reality. This is true because modern man through scientific advances has come to discover a certain mastery over nature. He is, thereby, delivered from the slavery of a natural piety.

This reversal of an understanding of the world is consonant with the Christian understanding of man's freedom as given by God. Before God man is no longer a child but a son. This means that man's freedom in faith has two directions or dimensions which must never be separated. Man is free for God and free from the world.

This freedom from the world which man experiences in his relationship with God is not an asceticism or world-denial, but it does involve precisely the kind of de-sacralizing which has taken place in the new understanding of man's relation to the world through secularization. Because man is free for God, he is free from the gods of natural piety, i.e., the "elemental spirits" which bind man to the world. Karl Heim had also sensed this liberating experience when he drew attention to the fact that the early apostles were called atheists (atheoi) because they deprived the world of their time of its nature gods and political deities.[1] Larry E. Shiner concludes that on the basis of this freedom the early Christians were in the eyes of their contemporaries guilty, not only of treason, but of "cosmic anarchy."[2] Gogarten's conclusion is that this freedom "demythologizes" man's existence in that it de-sacralizes the world. Because of this aspect of Christian freedom, the world can, therefore, be what it is, namely, the world!

This same freedom liberates man from the curse of the law of the

---

1. Karl Heim, "Christian Faith and the Growing Power of Secularism," p. 194.
2. Larry E. Shiner, "Secular Man," p. 18.

world. This freedom does not make man a libertine but gives him the power to exercise his reason as the rightful tool of discrimination in the world. Man no longer has to find his worship in the context of a legalism. He is freed from this compulsive relationship with the world. The law still is intact, but man's salvation does not depend upon his enslavement to the law. Man can in faith fulfill the law, and this delivers him from its curse. As the world is desacralized, so also is the law. Man is now to employ his reason to make his decisions in the world. Paul, the apostle, admonishes his readers to determine for themselves what is mandatory in the traditions of the past, i.e., the law. Indeed, for Paul "All things are possible" (I Corinthians 10:23), but not all things are advisable. The world is, therefore, under the direction of man's reason. This is exemplified in the process of modern secularization wherein man controls nature through his scientific reason.[1] Once again, what is to be seen here is that man is freed from the world to take his rightful place in that world as a creature who is responsible through his reason for the world. Man through faith has the right to his secularity.

2. Sonship and Forfeited Sonship

The above is but one aspect of the freedom which man received from God. While it is a freedom from the world which gives him a new relationship to the world, it is at the same time a new freedom for God. The freedom for God must be emphasized and held in inseparable relation with the freedom from the world. It is vitally important to distinguish these two aspects of faith, but it is even more important that they be held together. If they are not held together, Gogarten recognizes very plainly what the consequence will be:

---

[1] See Gogarten's assessment of modern science in this respect in *Die Verkündigung Jesu Christi* (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1948), p. 408.

> Everyday it becomes more and more questionable to us whether man, who through secularization has become an autonomous master of the world and himself, has grown up to the task which is laid on his shoulders, or whether he, who accepted this secularization with the "pathos" and "ethos" of freedom, is not just about to lose this freedom in a most fatal way.[1]

How, then, is man about to lose this freedom which has been given him? Man can lose this freedom by forgetting or ignoring the most important aspect of this freedom, namely, that is his freedom before God. This freedom is nothing less than man's sonship which he receives from the Father. Man knows his creaturehood only in the relationship with God; man recognizes his sonship only in relationship with the Father. In this sense man receives the world as an inheritance; he is a co-heir with Christ. This is man's meaning, i.e., his history.

Man may reject this history which has been given to him in that he forfeits his sonship. When sonship is forgotten, man turns again toward the world and worships it. This does not mean that sonship no longer exists. This sonship was made possible in a decisive event through Jesus of Nazareth wherein Jesus accepted his unique sonship from the Father. The forfeiting of sonship, therefore, does not mean that a new factor enters into the world standing between God and man. What has happened is that man's understanding of himself and his world has changed and changed in a radical and fundamental sense.

---

[1] Gogarten, *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit*, p. 9.

> We can express this difference succinctly by saying that man in rejecting the promise of God forfeits his sonship. Moreover, what someone forfeits is not simply lost. The thing forfeited now clings to him inseparably in its fundamental perversion. It is the essence of something forfeited that it cannot be recovered again, and that it cannot be changed back into its original essence. One can forfeit only what by its nature can only be given him. If man forfeits his sonship by rejecting the promise of God, the perversion influences the distortion of the promise of God. It affects everything grounded in this promise, without exception, even the distortion of the world as the inheritance from the divine Father. The world and the inheritance become fundamentally perverted.[1]

This radical perversion of the sonship-relation is in actuality the operation of man's reason apart from faith. When reason is separated from faith two possibilities present themselves: a heteronomous and perverted faith attempts to gain control over so-called autonomous reason, or, on the other hand, autonomous reason attempts to gain control over faith. Both options are regrettable since in the former case faith ceases to be faith, i.e., it ceases to free man for the world, and in the latter case reason makes faith negligible. In both cases man does not lose his sonship; he remains the master of nature. What must be seen, however, is that this is forfeited sonship, and it issues in the opposite of sonship. Man once again becomes what he is not.[2]

---

[1] Gogarten, The Reality of Faith, pp. 59-60.

[2] See Gogarten, Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt, pp. 136, 342. For a similar exposition see Gogarten, Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit, p. 140.

The end result is that man must again turn to the world for his meaning, and in turning to the world he sacralizes it again. The world is refused the right to be itself. In this perversion man has no other option than to seek his being from the world. St. Paul calls this situation "futility" and "decay" (Romans 8:20-21).[1] Gogarten speaks of this perversion of the being of the world as "nothingness."

> The nature and power of this nothingness can be fully grasped only when one understands its effect. The call of God, which calls into being that which is not, is perverted into its opposite. Thereafter, everything that is, is called into nothingness. This is what is brought about because the law through the exchange of the Creator for the creature has become the law of "sin and death." In other words, it has become the law that serves sin and death in order to maintain its power over creation. For when man exchanges the Creator for the creature, when he impoverishes the creature and deprives him of his creaturely relation to God, he forfeits everything to which God's call has summoned him. Man's concern for the things of this world is then ruled necessarily by the nonbeing of the creature.[2]

The context of forfeited sonship supplies the ground for the rise of the varying types of Weltanschauungen and ideologies which grip the being of man and pervert it. Gogarten sees that this is at the heart of every totalitarian movement. This was the problem of the Jewish bondage to the law and the Greek bondage to the cosmos. This is the same problem with modern ideological movements. Forfeited sonship is, therefore, the equivalent of secularism. Gogarten is careful to make this distinction: true sonship is the ground for secularization;

---

[1] Gogarten, Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt, p. 344.
[2] Gogarten, The Reality of Faith, p. 67.

forfeited sonship produces secularism.[1] Secularism is viewed by Gogarten in two ways. It can manifest itself in a sacralizing of the world through ideological structures. This is what Gogarten calls asking for the "whole," i.e., the attempt to include the whole world within one interpretative meaning which has been derived from the world. On the other hand, in modern times many men have ceased to ask the question of the "whole." Instead, this form of secularism, either latently or openly, considers every question as useless and non-sensical. This is the advent of modern nihilism. The irony of this situation is that both of these expressions of secularism are religious in nature. The problem of secularism is not its anti-religious direction, but the problem is precisely its religious character. Secularism creates a new deity of itself, and, thereby, refuses to allow the secular to be truly secular. Herein lies the nemesis of secularism. It is in essence the forfeited sonship of man.

3. Secularization and Faith

Gogarten now brings his argument to a conclusion. Throughout his treatment of secularization, and, indeed, throughout his entire theological enterprise, he has sought to make a proper distinction between the faith-relationship and the world which is characterized by works. Indeed, this is the highest concern of faith that a proper distinction be made. It is only in this distinction that the central

---

[1] See Gogarten, *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit*, pp. 134-148, for the extended treatment of the contrast between secularization and secularism.

Reformation doctrine of salvation by grace through faith can be understood as that which is realized by God and by Him alone. If this distinction is made clear, then it can be seen that secularization has its beginning in faith itself. This is so since faith understands the worldly meaning of man's works, carried out by human reason, to be justly the *saeculum*. This secularization of the world, therefore, cannot be either chosen or rejected by man. This secularization *has* to happen.[1]

In this sense Gogarten sees secularization as a legitimate consequence of the Christian faith. Only in faith can the world be the world and man be man. In his state as a *mündiger* son man has to rule the earth through his reason. Gogarten, on the other hand, very clearly sees that today secularization has taken place without an overt reference to the Christian faith. Indeed, secularization has received tremendous prominence and determines really the whole human situation. Does this mean that the Christian faith has deteriorated and therefore must be left behind? Gogarten sees in this *de facto* state of affairs a task for the Christian faith, the important task which it has not yet fulfilled in the modern world, and since it has not fulfilled this task the Christian faith stands guilty before the modern world. This task is of the very nature of the Christian gospel. It is not only the world, but Christendom, which has to be distinguished from the Christian faith. For, indeed, the official expressions of the Christian Church have

---

1. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

become victims of secularism. Christendom participates in secularism. This point is made equally emphatically by Bonhoeffer when he calls for a nonreligious interpretation. For, after all, is not the nonreligious interpretation a de-sacralizing of the world and the church so that neither pre-empts the sovereignty of God's call in Jesus Christ? Is this not what is meant when one says that a nonreligious interpretation is a faith-ful interpretation?[1]

In contrast to secularism, the Christian faith places man in responsibility _for_ the world but not _to_ the world. Mature sonship is responsible only _to_ God. In this sense man stands always before God in what Gogarten calls an asking-not-knowing relationship. He asks for the meaning of the whole, i.e., for the meaning of life and the world. Gogarten sees that this quest for wholeness or meaning is at the heart of the philosophical question. Philosophy cannot answer the question; only faith can do so. Faith does this by telling man that he must see this world as a creation of God and see himself as a son, who as a _mündiger_ son in faith has the responsibility for the world, but the wholeness or meaning can only be found in faith.[2] Such an answer leaves history open to the future, since it does not supply man with a new system which a philosophical answer would do. This future comes to man in pure futurity.[3] Gogarten wants to keep this futurity,

---

1. See chapter IV of this dissertation.
2. Gogarten, _Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit_, pp. 109-117.
3. See Gogarten, _ibid._, pp. 174-194, for a discussion of his understanding of New Testament eschatology. Only a rather general statement can be made as to the eschatological issue in this discussion. The main point is that faith is always an openness to pure futurity.

toward which faith moves, as pure futurity. One should hope "for hope against hope" (Romans 4:18).[1] Why must this future of God be kept empty from man's point of view? It must be so, according to Gogarten, since only God can accomplish the wholeness or meaning of the world. This meaning does not reside in man's works, or else these works would be man's righteousness. Man and his world can only expect the wholeness which the world cannot supply from God's Zu-kommen to them. As far as the supervision of the worldly works is concerned, these must be done in an anticipation of the future. It is clear, therefore, that Gogarten sees the task of the Christian faith in this manner: it lets the world be the world and at the same time it shows the world that it has to find its meaning, its wholeness in the atoning Creator, who comes to man in pure futurity and over against whom man stands in an "asking-not-knowing" stance.

E. A Critical Reflection

The major thrust of Gogarten's argument is that the Christian faith is not only compatible with the process of secularization, but secularization is the necessary sociological and historical result of Christian faith. In this respect his theological program amounts to an elaboration of Bonhoeffer's thesis that "man come of age" is a reality rooted in a Christological fact.[2] They are joined in this particular reading of social history and Christian theology by a number of modern scholars from various disciplines. Roger Mehl, the Strasbourg professor of philosophy;[1] D. L. Munby, the English sociologist;[2] Carl Michalson, the American Methodist theologian;[3] and continental Roman Catholic theologians such as Alfons Auer,[4] Karl Rahner,[5] and Johannes Metz,[6] are at this point in basic agreement.[7] No one in contemporary theological discussion has treated this thesis with the perception and precision as has Gogarten. In spite of a full theological career in which he has addressed himself to many of the traditional theological questions such as Christology and soteriology,[8] law and gospel,[9] faith and works,[10] and subjectivism versus objectivism,[11] the phenomenon of secularization has been a thread which has worked its way throughout all of his work. His major theological contribution will undoubtedly remain this distinctive service which he has rendered in delineating the ancestry and current significance of secularization. It is a unique contribution in that without engaging in defensive apologetic maneuvers Gogarten has taken the pulse-beat of the contemporary secular climate, has allowed this climate of maturity to remain what it is, and at the same time has given it a deeper meaning through his placement of it in its rightful context within the nature of Christian faith itself.

---

[1] Ibid., pp. 127, 136, 186.

[2] See section D, 1, of this chapter for a statement of the distinction between Gogarten and Bonhoeffer at this point.

---

[1] Roger Mehl, "La secularisation de la cité," ed. Jean Boisset (Paris: Presses Universitaries de France, 1961), pp. 14ff.

[2] D. L. Munby, *The Idea of a Secular Society* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

[3] Carl Michalson, *The Rationality of Faith* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963).

[4] Alfons Auer, "Gestaltwandel des christlichen Weltverständnisses," *Gott in Welt*, I (Freiburg-Breisgau: Herder, 1964). An English translation appears in *The Christian and the World* (New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons, 1965), pp. 3-44.

[5] Karl Rahner, "Anthropologie (theologische)," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, I (Freiburg-Breisgau: Herder, 1957), p. 622.

[6] Johannes Metz, "Weltverständnis im Glauben," *Geist und Leben*, 35 (1962), pp. 165-184. See the English translation in *The Christian and the World*, pp. 68-102.

[7] It should be noted, however, that while there is a consensus in that secularization is a result of the Christian faith, only Carl Michalson, of those mentioned above, follows the same theological route in support of this thesis.

[8] Gogarten, *Die Verkündigung Jesu Christi*.

[9] Gogarten, *Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt*.

[10] Gogarten, *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit*.

[11] Gogarten, *The Reality of Faith*.

The question should, however, be raised: does a study of the history of the west actually support the thesis that the origin of secularization is within the Christian faith? This is not to raise the question if this should be the case. Gogarten's theological argument at this point stands secure. The question is rather: does history support the fact that the Christian faith has given birth to and should receive credit for the modern phenomenon of secularization?

It is unquestionable that the early church in its proclamation of the event of God in Jesus Christ and in its call for complete allegiance to the God of this event did imply, and at times explicitly did call for, a rejection of the gods of this world. In this sense it is true to say that the early Christian proclamation was a call to desacralize the cosmos and the political forces which tended to deify themselves. This conviction within the early church, however, gave rise to a kind of abhorrance of the world and manifested itself in the movements of the hermits to their wilderness retreats. The Platonic influences upon Christian thought during the patristic period and particularly into the Middle Ages further enforced this rejection of the world. Christianity has had to fight hard to overcome this nefarious influence![1] In this sense Christian faith in the west produced a propensity for world-rejection which hardly conforms with the modern image of secularization.

The modern world probably owes its origin to the "New Philosophy" of Francis Bacon rather than to the Renaissance and Reformation. Bacon's concept of inductive reasoning was an attempt to map out and explore the whole realm of nature without any other commitments than to the method of induction alone. This, it would seem, is the beginning of the modern scientific spirit so much a part of secularization. In all of his endeavors, Bacon remained a faithful son of the church, but he segregated the new science from the old religion. The same is true with Isaac Newton.[2] Was this separation not due to the fact that the church, having renounced nature, had to sit by and watch science go its own way? The warfare between science and religion which ensued has been chronicled, and the account serves to substantiate this thesis.[3] The movement of the eighteenth century toward deism and its attendent high respect for science can be understood only within this context. While the eighteenth century still held to certain convictions of the previous age, the philosophers of this period found it necessary to "secularize" these religious convictions, and the result was a form of crypto-atheism.[4] The pietistic movement in German

---

1. The historical survey in chapter II of this dissertation bears out this conclusion.
2. See Herbert Butterfield, The Origins of Modern Science (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951).
3. A. D. White, A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology (New York: Appleton, 1909).
4. Carl Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers.

Lutheranism was actually a retreat from the outer world to the inner world as an insulation from the stings of the darts of the new intellectual climate.[1] The results of the church's rejection of nature can be seen in the contemporary period as a secularization without any reference to the Christian faith. This would imply that much of modern secularization is by Gogarten's definition a secularism rather than authentic Christian secularity.

It might be suggested as a counter to this argument that this is precisely what Gogarten sees in his analysis of secularization. If this is the case, then the modern phenomenon of secularization has a rather ambiguous rootage in Christian faith in that it is the result of Christianity's having rejected the natural rather than having understood it in a proper manner. The conclusion would, therefore, be that Christian man misunderstood himself and his relation to the world, and the result of this misunderstanding is the root of modern secularism.

In no sense should this historical criticism of Gogarten's thesis detract from the real merit of what he has written. In his exposition of Christian freedom he has called the church's attention to an important aspect of its faith which it has come dangerously close to disregarding. Whether modern secularization is rooted historically in Christian man's self-understanding as a new freedom from the world and responsibility for the world is not really the crucial issue at this point. The issue is: can the church hear this message of freedom and responsibility now that secularization has become an unmistakable reality? In the past the church has acted as though it could not understand and receive this new gospel of freedom in responsibility. The refusal to hear and receive this gospel gives the world only one option, i.e., to turn to itself for its meaning and thereby to turn to secularism. The guilt of secularism is the church's guilt. Can the church through its theology and life become that liberating force which sets man free from secularism so that he might be free for a genuine Christian secularity? This is Gogarten's pressing question to the church, and the question demands an answer theologically and empirically.

---

[1] See chapter II, 3, of this dissertation.

Another question must be put to Gogarten, however, which strikes much closer to the heart of his whole theological enterprise. As has been demonstrated, Gogarten attempts to explicate the Christian faith exclusively in terms of history. This means that man and the world must be understood historically, i.e., through the aid of a new method of thinking which is historical reason rather than natural reason. Man is, therefore, viewed as the unique creature whose existence is understood as that of a unique creature who is called into being by the Creative Word and who in turn exercises his call responsibly in the control of the world. In this fashion Gogarten succeeds in casting theological statements into a historical-existential mold. Every theological statement must be a statement of man's self-understanding before the Word of God which calls that which was not into being.

The suspicion cannot be suppressed that there is in this style of theologizing a shying away from the question of man as a creature of nature, who lives and decides in the context of nature, and whose salvation is still a salvation within nature as well as history. It cannot be denied that man is who he is because he is where he is, and in this respect Gogarten is partially correct. Man is a creature placed in a historical community and receives his being in the I-thou relation through the neighbor. This, for Gogarten, is the limit which always confronts man, i.e., the "thou" of the neighbor.[1] Gogarten has learned this lesson of the human limit from the philosophy of Martin Buber among others. What he has not seen, however, is that there is another limit which also confronts man in Buber. Man is who he is because he is where he is in nature as well as in history. To fail to see this dual limit of man's human situation is within the context of Christian faith to do serious harm to the doctrine of divine grace. Self-hood is called into being in this twofold relationship with man (history) and with the earth (nature). It should be obvious that when one's neighbor is lost, one's selfhood is shrunk, and when the earth is lost, one's selfhood is perverted. What really seems to be missing in Gogarten's anthropology is a recognition of the somatic nature of faith.[2] The relationship with the "thou" of a neighbor can

---

1. While Gogarten derives much of his insight from the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, as well as Buber and Grisebach, at this point he differs significantly from Heidegger. The limit which confronts man in Heidegger is death; in Gogarten it is the neighbor. That which constitutes man's historicity (Geschichtlichkeit) is his decision to love responsibly, whereas in Heidegger it is the ability to accept the future, i.e., death.
2. See Regin Prenter, "Das Evangelium der Säkularisierung," Theologische Zeitschrift, 12. Jahrgang (1956), 605ff. Prenter raises this question to Gogarten in an entirely different context than that which is mentioned here. As was seen earlier in this chapter, Prenter was mistaken in his criticism of Gogarten, but Prenter's mistake hardly holds in this case.

certainly be understood as a historical relationship, and in this sense Gogarten is right. But does he take serious account of man's fissure with nature?

This failure to reckon with man-in-nature can be seen in Gogarten's understanding of man's responsibility over the world in the physical sciences. Here man's control is viewed purely in a positivistic, technological sense.[1] But is this not one of the contributing factors to contemporary nihilism which Gogarten rightly holds to be a radical form of secularism? So long as man is divorced from nature, his only means of relationship with nature is through technique. This, in itself, is not sufficient to bring meaning to human existence. Can the Christian doctrine of grace speak to man in this situation? If grace addresses the whole man, the answer to this question must obviously be Yes. In his own particular time and in his own particular way Francis of Assisi understood divine grace reaching to and operating through man and nature alike. The significance of grace was both existential and cosmic.[2] While it may be true that only man has a history, man and the cosmos have a common Creator. It was the conviction that the historical and natural should never be separated which led Karl Heim to write:

---

[1] See Gogarten, *The Reality of Faith*, pp. 90ff.

[2] Cf. chapter II, C, 4, of this dissertation. For a very suggestive essay on the contemporary importance of St. Francis in this respect see L. Scheffczk, "Der *Sonnengesang* des hl. Franziskus von Assisi und die *Hymne an die Materie* Teilhard de Chardin. Ein Vergleich zur Deutung der Struktur christlicher Schöpfungsfrömmigkeit," in *Geist und Leben*, 35 (1962), pp. 219-233.

> Protestantism . . . has been content to extract from the overall picture of reality . . . the history of our salvation, which tells how mankind, created by God, falls and is redeemed and perfected, and to develop this theme in every direction. It thought it could confidently leave the rest to the profane sciences.[1]

He has been joined in this concern by Evode Beaucamp, the Roman Catholic theologian:

> Perhaps we have, in the past, been too quick to dissociate, in an unreasonably conclusive and arbitrary manner, the religious drama of humanity from the universe on which it is staged.[2]

An adequate theology of the secular must do justice to God's grace in Jesus Christ, to the whole man as the recipient of that gift, and to the earth which is as much a part of the grace-ful creation as is man. An adequate theology of the secular, therefore, must at the same moment be an adequate theology of nature. Without this consideration both the doctrines of grace and anthropology will be seriously lacking and will in themselves become perverted. Such an adequate theology will of necessity have to view nature as something more than the neutral nexus of man's existence. At least such a theology would have to begin with the recognition of a symbiotic relationship between man and nature.[3]

This failure to account adequately for man-as-nature, as well as man-as-history, carries with it other serious implications as have been pointed to in the expository section of this chapter. Accompanying Gogarten's refusal to deal with nature, except as that material over which man in his reason is set free to control, is a serious dichotomy between *faith* and *works* or the *Gospel* and *law*. The lack of consideration of faith's somatic nature leads Gogarten to reject the possibility of "Christian ethics" as proper theological subject matter. Certain questions must be put to Gogarten at this point. He persuasively argues that man is a creature of responsibility *to* God and that at the same moment this is a responsibility *for* the world. The phenomenon of secularization is convincingly argued by Gogarten in terms of the dual-responsibility *to* God and *for* the world. At the same time, Gogarten seems to want to divide the responsibility *to* God and place this in the category of *faith*, whereas the responsibility *for* the world is placed in the category of *works*. The two, *faith* and *works*, are not only made distinct but are actually dichotomized. Gogarten would insist that the dichotomy does not exist since genuine secularity consists in a recognition of this twofold responsibility. At the same time it is highly questionable if the concept of responsibility *to* God *for* the world as a trusteeship is sufficiently stable to hold in unified perspective *faith* and *works*. What is significantly absent here is a clear recognition of the somatic nature of faith and a theological insight to which Dietrich Bonhoeffer called attention. If Jesus Christ is Lord of the world, this is a Lordship over nature as well as history; it is a Lordship over the works of man as well as a Lordship in terms of man's existential relationship of responsibility *to* God. What is required for a proper recovery of the secular by faith and what is required for a proper holding together of law and Gospel is precisely an understanding of the Lordship of Christ over the entirety of the world both as history and as nature. Bonhoeffer in his *Ethics* drew eloquent attention to this fact.

That this particular phrasing of the doctrine of the Lordship of Christ is not consonant with Gogarten's theological approach can be seen in the fact that Gogarten refuses to probe behind the "work" of Christ to speak of his "person" or "being." That such a probing requires ontological considerations which cannot be put into the existential-historical mold of Gogarten's theological approach is no doubt true. This should indicate the limitations of such an exclusively existential-historical approach to theology. If one cannot proclaim the Lordship of Christ over the entirety of the creation, then it is understandable why one cannot derive from theological considerations any ethical insights which might be considered particularly Christian.

Certainly there is no scriptural warrant, either from the writings of Paul or the Gospels, to suggest that no integral relationship exists between _faith_ and _works_. Jesus admonished his hearers that "by their fruits, you shall know them."[1] It was the Apostle Paul, himself, who wrote: "It is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified."[2] This does not imply that _works_ will lead to righteousness, but in both cases it is the justifying love of God in Christ which will lead the believer into faithful deeds of love. Nor can it be insisted that Luther, the reformer, separated _faith_ and _works_ into separate realms. It was the overarching conviction of the sovereignty of God as revealed in Christ which held law and Gospel in dialectical but integral relationship in Luther.[3]

---

1. Matthew 7:16.
2. Romans 2:13.
3. See chapter II, D, d, of this dissertation.

Indeed, it must be insisted that when *faith* and *works*, *law* and *Gospel*, are separated or held together in such tenuous manner as in Gogarten, there is little assurance that man's autonomy over the world will not degenerate into the very secularism which Gogarten so rightly laments. It is not that the concept of man's responsibility *for* the world *to* God is to be rejected. Rather, that responsibility requires the grounding which only the complete Lordship of Christ over the world as well as history supplies.

Existentialist theology, such as Gogarten's has made a significant contribution to the total theological enterprise in calling concerted attention to the necessity of dealing with doctrine in a relational context. The appeal expressed here is for an enlargement of the context from that found in Gogarten. One cannot but wonder if the "existentializing" of creation in Gogarten's theology is not but a continuation of a flight from nature as can be witnessed in the previous theological generation in Wilhelm Hermann's summary of the theological task with the phrase, "the communion of the Christian with God," in the Neo-Kantian emphasis upon the primacy of the moral consciousness, and in P. T. Forsyth's insistence upon the "moralizing of dogma." It is perhaps historically understandable why for a period this kind of theological reductionism would have been necessary to correct a previous generation's mistakes. It certainly would not be mandatory nor advisable to continue such a reductionism. Indeed, one of the pressing theological demands of the present time is to discover how to speak of nature and the stuff of the earth with positive assessment.

Joseph Sittler speaks directly and relevantly to this point.

> The largest, most insistent, and most delicate task awaiting Christian theology is to articulate such a theology for nature as shall do justice to the vitalities of earth and hence correct a current theological naturalism which succeeds in speaking meaningfully of earth only at the cost of repudiating specifically Christian categories. Christian theology cannot advance this work along the line of an orthodoxy -- new or old -- which celebrates the love of heaven in complete separation from man's love in earth.[1]

The question of theological procedure can hardly be the "either-or": shall we think in terms of history or shall we think in terms of nature? To think in terms of nature without history is blatantly un-Christian, for Gogarten has made clear that when such is done, the "elemental spirits" of the universe take over and man is immersed in the world. On the other hand, to think in terms of history without a due consideration of the natural is to view man and the *saeculum* in a partial manner. How the two can be held together is a task for theological reconstruction.

---

[1] Joseph Sittler, "A Theology for Earth," *The Christian Scholar*, XXXVII (1954), p. 369.

VI. TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF THE SECULAR

In the mid-twentieth century the phenomenon of secularization has become a factor which cannot be ignored from either the sociological, moral, historical or theological perspective. In this respect a new theological assessment in the light of the Christian faith is mandatory. How can theology in a "world come of age" address itself to modern man in such a way that he will be able to understand himself and his world in an intelligible and meaningful manner? Christian theology cannot render this task responsibly without serious dialogue with its sources and its traditions. The biblical and historical prologue to this dissertation[1] has been an attempt to delineate the sources and to show the nature of the problem in the western Christian tradition. In the consideration of the biblical sources it was seen that the biblical categories of "creation" and "world" are integrally related with the biblical category of "time." It is precisely at the point where the biblical understanding of "time" converges with the biblical understanding of the "world" that the modern category of the "secular" becomes obvious. Christian man finds himself in a particular history with the tasks of civilization-building incumbent upon him. What, then, is the relationship of the two? It was seen earlier that when these categories of

---

[1] See chapter II of this dissertation.

"time" and "world" are brought into their integral nexus a type of biblical Heilsplan or Heilsgeschichte is necessary to make a proper distinction between the two and at the same time to hold them in their essential unity. The attention of this study now is turned toward a possible theological reconstruction with these convictions in the forefront.

A. A Critical Summary

Against the background of increasing secularization the three theologians of this study, Heim, Bonhoeffer, and Gogarten have sought to do their work. Before beginning the theological reassessment proposed for this chapter, it would be well to recapitulate the particular problems on which each man focused and the critical responses to these problems. Heim rightly sensed that one of the major factors in modern secularism was the loss of transcendence. So long as man could not conceive of transcendence his only option remained to lose himself in the polar structures of this world, i.e., in tyrannical absolutisms or in meaningless relativisms. Heim devoted his entire theological career to an endeavor to make transcendence once again a viable option for modern man. While it is dubious that a whole new Weltanschauung, complete with metaphysical speculations, is necessary for the task to which Heim set himself, it cannot be denied that his concern for a conceivable transcendence speaks to one of the real issues in modern secularistic mentality.

Bonhoeffer turned his focus in another direction. Rather than meeting the secular with an answer from without, Bonhoeffer sought to understand the actual basis of the modern, secular "world come of age." He found this basis in the central affirmation of the Lordship of Christ. This was a Lordship of identification with the world to such an extent that the ontological reality of Christ and the world were fused. Bonhoeffer, however, correctly located what must be the beginning point of every theologian's concern with a proper assessment of the world and the natural -- the integrity of the world and the natural lies in the concrete reality of God's creative and redemptive identification with the world. This must be the starting-point for a Christian assessment of the secular. While the Christological form which Bonhoeffer adopted may be deficient to bear such a weighty responsibility as a recovery of the natural, the Christological focus does serve to call theological attention to its proper beginning-point.

The question which occupies the attention of Gogarten is history phrased in an existential form under the influence of figures such as Buber, Grisebach, and Heidegger. Through his efforts to re-cast the central tenets of the Christian faith into an existential-ontological form consonant with his understanding of history, Gogarten has achieved a remarkably cohesive and persuasive argument for the legitimacy of the phenomenon of secularization within the Christian faith itself. Gogarten has rightly understood that the basic fabric of the Christian faith is historical. But does this admission call for a presentation of the faith in exclusive historical-existential concepts? If such is accomplished, and Gogarten at times brilliantly succeeds, is not the question of nature left out of the theological picture entirely? Is it possible to conceive of man and the world in terms which evade their close and vital relationship with nature? It is, perhaps, understandable why nature as a theological category has been bypassed in recent theological work. Nature has brought travail to theology and the church on many occasions. The rise of National Socialism in Germany in the twentieth century is but one illustration. On the other hand, however, if it is avoided completely, will it not raise its head in the form of a new naturalism? Somehow the basic historical character of faith must be preserved without ignoring other dimensions. It is one thing to assert the basic historical character, and it is another thing entirely to claim that the Christian faith is exclusively historical! A right recovery of the secular as a Christian category will require a right recovery of nature as well.[1]

Against the backdrop of the modern phenomenon of secularization and the historical character of the Christian faith, there have emerged in this study three major theological issues: the conceivability of transcendence, the Christological foundation of the natural, and a proper recovery of nature within a historically oriented faith. It is not the intention to synthesize these three theological positions. Indeed, it would be impossible to do so! But are not these the three major issues which confront any adequate theological assessment of the secular? Without some concept of transcendence theology is left with only one alternative, i.e., immanental idolatry. Without a Christology anchored in the very world which needs a new understanding of itself, the world is left without a proper knowledge of its Creator and Redeemer. Without an adequate theological understanding of nature, the Christian faith is left without a somatic concreteness, and faith easily, thereby, becomes docetic.

---

[1] In this regard James Barr is correct to criticize the unguarded use of "revelation through history" by many biblical theologians. Barr, however, speaks more to the fact that God reveals himself through direct encounter with certain persons -- an encounter which goes beyond commonly accepted definitions of history. He does not address himself to the biblical understanding of nature as such. See James Barr, "Revelation through History in the Old Testament and in Modern Theology," in _New Theology No. 1_, ed. Martin Marty and Dean Peerman (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), pp. 60-74.

The quest for a proper theological schema which will do justice to these concerns as they are related to an understanding of the secular must be discovered. Unless this is achieved theology will once again have bypassed the issue and will have again incurred the guilt of the world's secularism.

B. The Relevance of a Heilsplan for a Theology of the Secular

Apart from the historical concreteness of Hebraic-Christian thought, two major options confront man in his attempt to understand himself and his relation to the world. These options are idealism and naturalism. The former follows the lines established by the tradition of Greek philosophy which founded itself upon an ontological dualism between nature and spirit. The world of nature was seen to be transient, mutable, always in flux, and, therefore, inferior to the stable, eternal, unchanging realm of the spirit or the ideal. The Christian West has felt the subtle and seductive hand of this persuasion more than once.[1]

---

[1] E.g., see chapter II, C, 3 and 5 of this dissertation.

The latter option is for man to understand himself and his relation to the world in naturalistic terms. Here is the opposite of Greek idealism. Nature is the real, and beyond it there is nothing. Man, therefore, endeavors to find in nature that primal unity of the divine and the natural, and, thereby, to interpret himself in the light of this unity. Essentially this is an immanentism. This option has always stood at variance with basic Christian theological convictions and has rarely found a home within Christian theology.

In both of these options there is a flight from the world as the nexus of man's responsible existence before God. One either flees above the world, or one flees into the world. Neither position has the potential of offering to man a free relationship with the world which would produce a genuine secularity.

In contrast to these options the Hebraic-Christian tradition has confronted man with a different choice. Man is called to understand himself and his world within the context of a particular history. It is within the context of this particular history that man comes to know that the world-as-nature is fraught with meaning because the God revealed in Jesus Christ is the gracious Creator. Likewise, it is within the context of this history that man comes to know that the world-as-time is delivered from the bonds of a fatalism or a nihilism because in Jesus Christ he sees the God who is the Alpha and the Omega. In short, "the human person and man's society," as Reinhold Niebuhr has profoundly observed, "are by nature historical . . . the ultimate truth about life must be mediated historically."[1]

It would seem feasible, therefore, that the problems which have presented themselves in the analytical portions of this study, i.e., transcendence, Christology, and nature, as they meet in the concept of the secular be explicated within the context of this particular history. The method of Christian theology is basically deductive, and this particular history forms the initial premise. Not only does this seem to be sound procedure methodologically, but such a procedure brings the discussion into direct relationship with the earlier discussion of the temporal character of biblical thinking regarding the world and man. Additionally, if the historical understanding of faith is the correct understanding, this marks a distinct break with the presuppositions of the two previous options for understanding. This in no sense implies that the historical understanding of faith considers no longer nature and the world of secular involvement. Quite to the contrary, a historical understanding of faith insists that nature is a real factor of history and that history is, indeed, the very sphere of man's secular activity. A historical understanding of faith, therefore, safeguards theological activity simultaneously from immanental naturalism and world-rejecting idealism.

Several preliminary considerations must be sketched before beginning the project of theological reassessment. These considerations are in the form of a prolegomenon to the central task of this

---

1. Reinhold Niebuhr, "Religion and Education," Religious Education, November-December, 1953.

chapter. They are: (a) the relation of the self and history, (b) the relation of secular history to sacred history, (c) the "wordly" character of history, and (d) the reflexive and proleptic character of a Heilsplan.

(a) There is a profound sense in which it can be said that selfhood is a historical reality. Naturalism attempts to understand the self on its own terms, and, thereby, it fails to account for the uniqueness of the self-transcending character of selfhood. On the other hand, Greek idealism conceives of the self spiritualistically, and, thereby, fails to account for the uniqueness of the self as temporal and natural reality. Selfhood demands a history to account for its reality. Indeed, it is possible to say that every self is a history, but, at the same time, every self needs a wider and more expansive history in which to find its structure of meaning.
H. Richard Niebuhr underscores this fact when he writes, "To be self is to have a god; to have a god is to have a history."[1] To translate this into specifically Christian terminology this is to say: to be a genuine self is to be related to the God revealed in Jesus Christ; to be related to God is to have one's personal history judged and transformed into the history of God's people. In this way the integrity and authenticity of selfhood are made possible by the new meaning derived from participation in a new history. This new history is God's salvation history (Heilsgeschichte).

---

1. H. Richard Niebuhr, The Meaning of Revelation (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1941), p. 80.

(b) Salvation history has frequently been spoken of as transhistorical or supra-historical. Such language is misleading to say the least. This usage would imply that somehow there is a two-story structure to history and would rightly encourage the suspicion that here is a new expression of the old Platonic dualism in the garb of a theology of history.[1] A theology which takes its direction from a Heilsplan must insist that salvation history takes places within the history of this world. Salvation history and secular or universal history are not two antithetical realities. There is only one history, though this history may have more than one dimension. For example, the event of Israel's deliverance from Egypt was interpreted by the Egyptians, no doubt, in terms of secular, military history, while the same event was interpreted and became pivotal in Israel as sacred history. For Israel it was a different event because in faith she recognized this as the action of her transcendent Deliverer. Carl Michalson has rightly called attention to the pregnant relevance of Karl Heim's concept of dimensionality as a means of making conceivable this multi-dimensional character of history.[2] While Heim did not apply his concept of dimensional coordinates to the specific question of history, his concept in its relevance for a theology of history can be seen especially in his treatments of Christology and atonement.[1] Heim's concern is to show how that which is a part of human history can at the same time be said to have a dimension of transcendence. Heim's use of dimension is especially helpful in dealing with the transcendent aspect of a Heilsplan in that one does not have to depend upon spatial analogies to explicate the divine acts in history.

---

[1] This criticism has been voiced of Karl Barth's theology. See Jerome Hâmer, O. P., Karl Barth (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1962), p. 32: "The opposition between Historie and Geschichte contains not only the antithesis of created and uncreated, but also of profane and sacred." How mistaken Father Hâmer is can be shown by Barth's own statement which would support the above argument that salvation history and secular history must never be viewed as antithetical. See Barth, Church Dogmatics, I, 2, p. 50: "If we say Jesus Christ, we also assert a human and therefore temporal presence. . . . 'The Word became flesh' also means 'the Word became time.' The reality of the revelation of Jesus Christ is also what we call the lifetime of a man. It is also a section of what we call 'historical time,' or world history and its prehistorical time."

[2] Carl Michalson, The Hinge of History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), pp. 156-159.

A full treatment of Heim's concept of dimensionality is to be found earlier in this study. At this point a summary of the most relevant insights would be helpful. Heim argues that in two-dimensional space it is possible for only one straight line to be drawn which will never intersect an original given line. The case is radically different in three-dimensional space. Here a multiplicity of lines can be constructed which will not intersect the first line.

> That which in the space hitherto known was the excluded third is in the new space not excluded. It is included in the extended range of dimensional possibilities which this new space contains within itself.[2]

Heim moves from this initial consideration to positing a supra-polar or primal space which includes the polarities of two-dimensional space, i.e., physical space and inter-personal space, and in this primal space the polarities of the former space are overcome. In other words, in this primal space the presence of God is conceivable. This is not a "space above space," but this is a new dimension. This is, of course, an argument based on analogy, and it should not be interpreted as intending a metaphysical proof. Its intention is to make conceivable the possibility of additional dimensions to the two-dimensional spatial and chronological extensions of secular history.

---

[1] See Heim, Jesus the Lord, trans. D. H. van Daalen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), pp. 21-27, 146-153; see also, Heim, Jesus the World's Perfecter, trans. D. H. van Daalen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), pp. 214-224.

[2] Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, trans. N. H. Smith (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1953), p. 150.

While the *Heilsgeschichte* theologian must insist that secular history and salvation history are integrally fused, he must also admit that salvation history is a concealed history. In this sense the events of salvation history are not open to the same kind of scientific scrutiny as are the events of secular history. This for Christian faith is advantageous since it would be a serious qualification of the doctrine of justification by grace to claim scientific verifiability for faith prior to the moment of faith. On the other hand, it must still be insisted that salvation history is fused in secular history, i.e., it is a new dimension of history, and, if this is not kept in view, salvation history will lose its somatic nature and evaporate into an individualistic pietism or into flights of transempirical historical speculation. At this point, Heim's concept of dimensionality deserves more attention for a theology of history than has been accorded it.

(c) Salvation history is a theology of the Word. Both Heim[1] and Gogarten[2] have drawn pointed attention to the "wordly" character of history.

---

1. See Heim, *Jesus the Lord*, pp. 146-153.
2. See Gogarten, *Ich glaube an den dreieinigen Gott*.

Salvation history is in the midst of the movement of secular history, but it is distinguished from secular events in that its events are interpreted as God's transcendent Word in the *saeculum*. In short, God's Word is God's act. An event in the *Heilsplan* is explained by Heim as:

> . . . the event that filled time with Eternity took place in the form of talking, that is to say in the form which in conversation between "I" and "thou" we call speaking and listening.[1]

For modern, secular man such Word-language or Event-language is exceedingly difficult to comprehend. This is at the very heart of modern man's difficulty with the Christian faith and with the *Heilsgeschichte*. Heim understood this dilemma acutely:

> As long as the essence of transcendence has not dawned on us, as long as we still conceive of the beyond in a pre-Copernican manner, as something in space, as a higher sphere above the limited universe, we can always conceive of the intercourse between God and ourselves only to the effect that the ceiling of the lower space in which we live is suddenly opened and through the opening something comes down from the upper world into the world below.[2]

If the pre-Copernican world-view is no longer a viable option, how can theology speak to the "man come of age" of the activity of God, and how can theology speak of God's activity in fidelity to its "wordly" character?

---

1. Heim, *Jesus the Lord*, p. 146.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

Heilsgeschichte theology rightly understands that the Word is not an object but, rather, an act. Even here, however, the act cannot be dealt with in a scientifically objectifiable manner. The worldly act is never Word unless deciphered from the welter of sounds by a hearer. This, therefore, leads to a further demarcation of the word. As both Heim and Gogarten have underscored, the word is an encounter. As Heim points out:

> The word therefore creates a point of identity between two spaces of consciousness which are outside one another, which even while speaking remain foreign and ulterior to one another. In God Transcendent[1] we called this unity within a contrast that cannot be done away with, a meeting between spaces infinite in themselves as distinguished from the boundary between limited spaces. . . . Two spaces which meet each other retain their infinity. . . . Two infinite planes have one secant. In the same manner two spaces of consciousness remain infinities in themselves, while the word is a point of unity between them.[2]

This leads, therefore, to a final demarcation of the word. In this encounter of two spaces a coordinating or comprehending third space is possible to conceive, or else how can a real encounter take place?

This phenomenology of the structure of the word and its subsequent encounter is helpful in understanding how the divine Word as Act is possible for conception. The comprehensive space which allows for actual encounter is analogous to the way in which God's Word as Act can be understood as it is deciphered from the welter of secular acts

---

1. Heim, God Transcendent, trans. E. P. Dickie (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), pp. 168ff.
2. Heim, Jesus the Lord, pp. 149-150.

which make up secular history.

> For He comes to us in the way in which two spaces meet of which one is closed to the other. He comes to us indirectly, "from without," i.e., from outside the space in which we are comprehended, as one who from the outside knocks on the wall of my prison and thereby makes me painfully aware that I am in captivity.[1]

That which is revealed in this encounter is not simply a verbalization, for in inter-personal encounter that which is revealed is not simply the verbalizations of the other, but in the encounter through the word the "thou" of the other is unfolded. Likewise, in the divine-human encounter that which is revealed is the very nature of God himself, i.e., his "Thou-hood." In biblical thought God is never described in terms of his essence, but, rather,

> . . . he is known to Israel just in those forms of thought that are available to man, as one man seeks to reveal his mind and heart to another; in other words God is known by his speech and by his acts.[2]

(d) One final characterization of *Heilsgeschichte* must be stated. A *Heilsgeschichte* theology is both reflexive and proleptic in character. The time-line which moves from creation to final consummation is understood only from its center, i.e., Jesus Christ. The unity of history and the integrity of the created order are not to be found in a rational principle but in God's purpose "which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven

---

1. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
2. G. A. F. Knight, *A Christian Theology of the Old Testament* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1959), pp. 20-21.

and things on earth."[1] Only as the theologian takes his position at the center of the time-line can he reflexively understand the creation as a part of "the plan for the fullness of time," and only as he takes his position from this center can he understand that this "new creation" is the eschatological prelude to the eschatological end-time (parousia). It is only in the context of an understanding of the Word in Christ that one understands the fullness of divine grace in the Word in Creation and the Word in Consummation. In this way the unity of the Word is maintained in the midst of its "eventual" diversity. A modern Roman Catholic theologian chooses to show this unity of the Word through a Heilsplan by speaking of creation as that which "is mediated by the Word," redemption as that which is "effected by the Word incarnate," and the end of history as that point where "the Word incarnate comes again."[2] In all instances it is the same Word-made-flesh which speaks and calls forth into being that which was not.

> The eternal Word that God speaks to the world is in reality His Son; and all the words that God has spoken since the world began are gathered up in the mystery of this single Word. In Him alone is the meaning and secret of creation revealed to us.[3]

It has been necessary to delineate these particular characteristics of a Heilsgeschichte as a means for clearing the way for a proper understanding of the relationship of such a theological approach to a recovery

---

1. Ephesians 1:9-10.
2. James M. Connolly, Human History and the Word of God (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 211.
3. Suzanne de Dietrich, God's Unfolding Purpose (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 33.

of the secular as a category of Christian thought and life. Earlier in this study the biblical concepts of time, creation and world were examined in an endeavor to discover the Hebraic-Christian understanding of the world or *saeculum*. The conclusion of that *excursus* was that a theological recovery of the secular is not possible apart from a clear understanding of the biblical concepts of time and the world. It was seen there that such a reckoning with these categories suggested some type of *Heilsplan*. The preceding *prolegomenon* to a *Heilsgeschichte* states the formal characteristics of such a theological approach. What follows is not viewed as an exercise exclusively in biblical theology. There are many other aspects of biblical theology than can be encompassed in a *Heilsplan*. But systematic theology which takes seriously the sources of faith and, at the same time, takes equal cognizance of the modern cultural situation would find that a *Heilsplan* is, no doubt, the best expression of integrity to both concerns. The method which has been foremost in mind throughout the biblical *excursus* and *prolegomenon* has been ably expressed by Père Daniélou: "The use of scriptural principles for the resolution of questions to which these principles were not, in Scripture, explicitly applied."[1]

C. A Theological *Schema*

The concluding task of this study is now at hand. The intention of the following theological *schema* is to offer a suggested outline of a *Heilsgeschichte* focusing specifically on those issues which are related

---

1. Père Daniélou, S. J., *The Lord of History* (Chicago: Regnery, 1958), p. 3.

to a recovery of the secular as a category of Christian faith. What is here intended is not an empirical examination or rational explication of the secular as such, but rather a construction or proper placement of the secular within the content of a theology of revelation. The presupposition of this theological *schema* is that a balanced understanding of the historic *Heilsgeschichte* contains implicitly what is necessary for this proper recovery of the secular.

1. Creation: A Theology of the World

The doctrine of creation occupies a position of logical and theological priority in the plan of the acts of God, though the event of Christ offers the point from which this act is properly understood in Christian faith. The doctrine of creation is, therefore, not to be understood as an empirical description of the process of the beginning of the world.[1] Rather, the accounts of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 function not as empirical, scientific descriptions, but as covenant or theological confessions.

> These chapters were written for a community . . . They heard these stories with only the question: . . . what does the story wish to tell us about creation, that is about our belonging to creation, about being God's creature among the other creatures? . . . The original and the basic form of speaking about God as creator is not a recounting of how God created the world but a praising of God as the creator.[2]

---

[1] It is not theology's task to speculate concerning origin and ends of the natural order as Karl Heim does in such enticing ways in *The World: Its Creation and Consummation* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962).

[2] Claus Westermann, "God and His Creation," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, XVIII, No. 3 (March 1963), pp. 197-198.

It is, therefore, the function of theology, and particularly theology concerned with a proper recovery of the secular, to describe the theological meaning of the world as creation. In this sense, the doctrine of creation is an attempt to render a theological explication of nature and time as the God-given setting of the *saeculum*. The confessional or theological focus of the doctrine of creation is the New Creation effected through the event of Jesus Christ. It is imperative that this reflexive perspective be maintained, for as Langdon Gilkey has correctly observed, if creation and redemption are separated, "the Christian Gospel . . . falls apart."[1]

a) Christ the New Creation

A consideration of the doctrine of creation within the context of a *Heilsgeschichte* begins with the central point of that time-line, i.e., Jesus Christ. The Christian view of creation has as its beginning point not the creation in and of itself, but its beginning point is the New Creation effected through the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The Lordship of Jesus Christ over the creation has as its presupposition his identity with God in a pre-incarnate state and, thereby, his role as the agent and medium of all creation.[2]

In other words, the proper theological approach to the doctrine of creation is Christo-centric. This does not imply that Christian theology is exhausted in the doctrine of redemption, but the Christo-centric approach to creation is necessary if the problem which plagued medieval theology, i.e., the relationship between nature and grace, is to be resolved. To begin with creation or nature is eventually to posit two realities between which a tension will always exist, and this tension is rooted in the theological phrasing of the problem, not in reality itself.[1] Much effort on the part of the Reformers, Luther and Calvin, was directed toward overcoming this unfortunate statement of the problem. Contrary to the distinctions between nature and grace made by Melanchthon and subsequent Lutheran orthodoxy, Luther did not hold that nature or creation could be known by reason in contrast to the revelation of grace in Jesus Christ being known by faith only. Faith and reason were not compartmentalized in Luther as some modern interpreters of Luther, such as Friedrich Gogarten, would have one believe.[2] Actually, Luther felt that the proper understanding of creation was the goal, not the starting point of faith. He very plainly saw that the source of medieval double morality was rooted in this false theological phrasing of the problem of creation as nature and grace.[3] The Lutheran understanding of vocation depends upon this Christo-centric approach to creation. The fact is that both Christ and the Holy Spirit participate in the creation, and the result is that the natural things of life become the means of man's vocation before God.

---

[1] Langdon Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1959), p. 211.

[2] See Colossians 1:16ff.; Hebrews 1:2.

---

[1] See chapter II, section 3 and 5 of this dissertation for treatments of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas at this point. See also chapter IV, B, 3 for Bonhoeffer's critique of Neo-Protestant theology at this point.

[2] See chapter V, E of this dissertation.

[3] Luther, The Bondage of the Will, trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (London: Clarke, 1957), pp. 208f.

Calvin was desirous of showing that the creative *Logos* (Word) was also the redemptive *Logos* (Word). To make a hard-and-fast distinction between creation and redemption is, for Calvin, to fly in the face of the doctrine of the Trinity. Because God inheres in his fullness in Christ, one must be willing to say that Christ participates in the creation as well as in redemption. To say otherwise is to sunder the unity of the Trinity.[1]

A full and sufficient understanding of creation must involve an understanding of the revealed relationship between God, the universe and man. This is not only necessary for a doctrine of creation, but it is imperative for a proper recovery of the secular as the doctrine of creation is related to this. After all, what is the *saeculum* but this *nexus* of relationships. When the world as creation is understood in this relational sense, the creation can then be what it was intended to be, and it does not have to carry the weight of a sacralized world. The world, understood as creation before God, has no need to be anything other than the world. It is this understanding of the world which is given to the believer as a part of his participation in the New Creation. Gogarten rightly called attention to the fact that the nature of the New Creation was a freedom from the powers which seek to deify the natural order. A right understanding of nature and creation presupposes this very freedom which is granted to the Christian in the New Creation. To begin a theological schema from the standpoint of creation without reference to the New Creation endangers one to the possibilities of a natural speculation which at once says more than should be said, and from a Christo-centric reference says fatally less than can and must be said.

---

[1] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I, 14, 2. See W. Lütgert, "Calvins Lehre vom Schöpfer," *Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie*, 9 (1931), 421-440, for further treatment of Calvin's doctrine of creation.

In contemporary theology there has been a significant absence of attention to a doctrine of creation.[1] The question cannot be suppressed: is not this absence of attention to creation one of the contributing factors to modern secularism? The hesitancy to deal with this doctrine in a full and forthright manner is no doubt rooted in the Geist of contemporary experience where certain forms of the so-called orders of creation have played into the hands of regrettable political ends. The result has been a submergence of the doctrine of creation in a concentrated soteriology.[2] It cannot be denied that biblically speaking the

---

1. A notable example of reluctance to accord the doctrine of creation its full attention can be seen in Edmund Schlink, Theology of the Lutheran Confessions, trans. P. F. Hoehneke and H. J. A. Bouman (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961). Schlink expresses his reluctance in this manner: ". . . we must seriously ask whether this apparently minor emphasis on the doctrine of creation is not theologically necessary. . . . Is it not possible that those people who wish to say more about creation than is stated in the confessions no longer understand the gospel?" Schlink, ibid., pp. 37-38, 270.
2. Serious objection must be taken with Gogarten at this point. For in Gogarten's later works the doctrine of creation tends to be consigned to the one moment in which one understands his "creaturehood," i.e., his authentic existence under God. One cannot but wonder if the church's ancient renunciation of nature is still at work. Cf. Gustaf Wingren, Creation and Law, trans. Ross Mackenzie (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), pp. 31-44, where he deals with the relation between Christ and creation. Wingren's whole concern is to bring about a theological corrective to this preponderant emphasis upon soteriology to the exclusion of creation. Wingren's alternative has its problems, however, in that the Gospel is reduced to an answer to human guilt.

overwhelming attention is on the issue of soteriology. This, however, does not imply that the biblical kerygma is exclusively concerned with soteriology. To insist that the beginning point of a doctrine of creation is the Christ-point is not to confine oneself to the issue of salvation, but it is to see that in this one central point the key to the whole "mystery of God's plan" for the reconciliation of the world is to be found.[1]

Beginning with the reality of the New Creation has one additional advantage. Belief in the creation is not simply a reflexive belief toward the past. Creation is a continuous process. The Christian must understand, therefore, that God in Christ is the Lord of this continuing process. The Creator in lonely isolation from his New Creation can hardly communicate his Lordship to contemporary man. It is only from the standpoint of the New Creation that Christian man can affirm:

> As a Christian I am now in the grasp of a God who has created and is still creating the world. This God is not an abstract idea evolved by me, nor is it a hypothesis which I have constructed to explain the origin of the world. He is a datum of my present experience, a power at work in my present life giving substance to it. He is my Father, and I can experience him as such. My life is sustained in every moment by this God. Faith means that this fact is consciously accepted, and that I have come into a personal relationship with God who is my Creator, my Lord and Father.[2]

This belief in the continuing creation, a belief which is gained from the perspective of the New Creation, i.e., Christo-centrically, was Luther's own view of creation. When he spoke of providence, he understood this as the continuation of the divine, creative process. This emphasis on the continuing creation or divine providence is necessary to underscore the contingency of the created world. Creation always has a relative autonomy, and it is at the same moment a creation which is dependent upon its Creator. Whenever Christian theology has ignored this factor in the doctrine of creation, it has run the risk of deism. A creation of complete autonomy and a God who has no relationship with the creation except to have begun it as a "First Cause" are part of the same argument. It is for this reason that secularism and various forms of deism are so very closely related. It is, likewise, for this reason that a Christo-centric approach to creation and to the saeculum must be maintained, or, else, creation and redemption, law and Gospel become seriously separated.

---

[1] Ephesians 3:9-12.

[2] Ragnar Bring, "The Gospel of the New Creation," Dialog, 3 (Autumn 1964), p. 275.

b) The World as Creation

It is precisely the New Creation which frees the Christian from any temptation to that divinism which fails to appreciate that the world has a reality of its own. From this perspective one can now appreciate the radical implications of an understanding of the world as creation.

In an act of radical freedom and grace God's Word calls the world into being. This free and creative act cannot be described except in mythical and analogical language. It, therefore, cannot be analyzed through the methods of science since this creative act is outside the realm of predictable and discoverable relations between finite things.[1] Here, then, is the first important truth of creation: the knowledge of creation through faith is not first derived from exploration of the natural world, but this knowledge of creation is a derivative of revelation.

> The biblical doctrine of creation is a derivative of history, the sacred history of the chosen people. The creation account in Genesis I is not only prologue to the history which follows it and thus to be read in relation to it, but it is also a development of the election-historical life, of the redemptive history which has the Exodus as its center. It is a product of the mature reflection of Israel upon the meaning of her history within the purpose and grace of God.[2]

This does not imply that revelation-history and the natural world are separate realities. The transcendent meaning of the natural world is, however, to be found and interpreted through salvation history.

This interpretation of the transcendent meaning of the natural world through salvation history frees the natural world to be itself. The world as world does not have to embody God, i.e., it does not require divinization to give it its transcendent meaning.

The second major insight into the concept of the world as creation is to be found in the qualitative distinction between the Creator and his creation. This radical distinction of the Creator and the created stands in stark contrast to the cosmologies of the Greeks in both their dualistic and monistic forms. God is the sole source of all that

---

1. Langdon Gilkey, Maker of Heaven and Earth (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), pp. 54-55.
2. James Muilenburg, "The Biblical View of Time," Harvard Theological Review, LIV, No. 4 (October 1961), 242.

is. The world is neither an emanation nor the result of a Demiurge. The picture is simply that of a Creator and his creation. The Christian, is, therefore, not bound to a cosmology, nor is he required to erect a cosmology as an explanation of the world.[1]

The emphasis upon the absolute Creatorship of God underscores the dependence of all finite creation upon the Infinite Creator. While the world is separate from the Creator, it owes its existence to the Creator. While there is an autonomy of the world, it is a relative autonomy. The world need not exist. Secularism falls victim to the illusion that this autonomy is absolute. When the world is absolutized in this form, the natural order does not cease to be God's creation, but man's relation to it becomes perverted. He has exchanged the Creator for the creature. In this sense, the Christian tradition has spoken of the world as "fallen." This in no sense refers to the reality of the goodness of God's creation. Its point of referral is to man's irresponsibility before the Creator and his subsequent slavery to the world. It is at this point that secularism must make its first concession. When the dependence of the world upon its Creator is recognized, the opening is created for a genuine secularity. No longer does the world have to embody within itself a sacred meaning or an intrinsic secret. The world can now be the world without any divinism, hierocracy or what one Roman Catholic thinker has called an "ecclesiological monism."[2]

---

1. See chapter III, C, 3, where Heim is criticized at exactly this point for having considered it necessary to construct a "Christian Weltanschauung" as a replacement for the secularistic Weltanschauungen.
2. Alfons Auer, "The Changing Character of the Christian Understanding of the World," in The Christian and the World (New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons, 1965), p. 24.

The Christian understanding of creation does not stand in isolation from the Christian concern for history. The two are inseparably linked together. This linking is to be found in the fact the creation extends to time as well as to nature. "Time is the creation in process . . ."[1] Because of the doctrine of creation, history is seen to have a beginning and an end. The plan of God established before all time is a plan for history, but this statement has no meaning apart from an understanding that the time of history is the temporal form of creation itself. History is, therefore, the temporal form of man's activity before God, while the natural order is its material context. Time and nature are, therefore, the raw materials of the saeculum. To say that they are the "raw materials" is not to say that their status is neutral. Quite to the contrary, the divine blessing upon the creation, "Behold, it is good," is to assert that there is a positive meaning in both time and nature. Man's relationship to nature is not purely positivistic, nor is his activity in the political arena purely a matter of neutral practicality. Nature and time are endowed with a goodness which is fundamental to an understanding of the saeculum as meaningful.

c) Man as Created Responsibility

There is a profound sense in which creation has an "anthropological apex."[2] In the Genesis 1 account of creation man is precisely this "apex" as the crowning point of the whole creative process. In Genesis 2 creation is set between the points of the creation of man and the creation of woman. The intention in both accounts is the same. Man is the unique and special creation of God in the midst of time and nature. Man, therefore, is given the commission to "subdue" the earth and to have "dominion" over it.[1] The responsibility to "subdue" and "rule" is rooted in the uniqueness of man created in the image of God or called forth as the result of God's creative Word.[2]

---

[1] Claude Tresmontant, A Study of Hebrew Thought (New York: Désclée Brouwer, 1960), p. 35.

[2] Karl Rahner, "Anthropologie (theologische)," in Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, I, 620.

The *imago dei* has caused no end of speculation to determine its meaning. The medieval theologians following their distinctions between nature and grace made the distinction between the *imago* and the *similitudo*. In short, their insistence was that while man had lost the *imago*, he had not lost his *humanum*. Corresponding with the distinctions between nature and grace, here is found a distinction between the *imago* which is a form of super-nature and the *humanum* which is man's basic nature. If the distinction between nature and grace tends to create the impression of two distinct realities, this same distinction carried into theological anthropology creates the impression that man, likewise, is a combination of two realities. In his fallenness he has lost that which completes the natural. That such a division within man should be viewed as unacceptable for a theology of the secular should be quite obvious. There are not two realities, the natural and the supernatural, the sacred and the secular, but from the perspective of the New Creation there is one reality. This unitary reality is the redeemed natural which finds its rightful place as a responsibility before its gracious Creator.

---

[1] Genesis 1:28.

[2] Genesis 1:27.

Emil Brunner correctly points to the fact that the terminology of "image" and "likeness" is parabolic terminology.[1] Parabolic language must have a base in life itself and at the same moment possess a correspondence with that to which it refers. This recognition of the nature of parabolic language should indicate the necessity of a consistency in Christo-centric interpretation as was witnessed in the preceding treatment of creation. In the concrete man, Jesus Christ, is seen the actual life from which theology makes its parabolic departure in speaking of the _imago_. At the same moment in the man, Jesus Christ is seen the point of reference of such language. In short, Jesus Christ is the _Alpha_ and _Omega_ of theological language concerning the _imago dei_. One does not, and indeed should not, find it necessary to make divisions between the _imago_ and the _humanum_. In the Incarnation the unity between the two is established, and in the Incarnation one sees the true image of God. In the man, Jesus Christ, one sees the perfect response between man and God and the resultant responsibility which is the mark of God's favor upon man. The subtle metaphysical distinctions between nature and grace, _imago_ and _similitudo_, cannot carry the dynamic meaning of creation and man's place in the creation as response and responsibility. What is required for this dynamic, and at the same time, concrete understanding of the _imago dei_ is that which is seen in the perfect obedient humiliation of Jesus Christ.[2] Here is seen the New Man whose being cannot be divided between his imago and his humanum. At this central point in the Heilsplan man's distorted responsibility which has led to his slavery to the world is taken upon the person of Jesus Christ. A restoration is effected whereby the new man in Christ is set free to exercise his responsibility in the "care of the earth."

---

[1] Emil Brunner, _Man in Revolt_, trans. Olive Wyon (London: Lutterworth Press, 1957), p. 96.

[2] Philippians 2:8.

Man's response in the saeculum is, therefore, a response of the New Creation which does not annull the old but restores it to its original intention as God's "good creation." The man in Christ is, thus, the man who re-presents the responsibility which has become concrete in the events of the Incarnation and Crucifixion. The "new man" recapitulates the obligation to man and to God which has been made concrete in Christ, but the "new man" does this with a freedom which only the act of God in Christ makes possible. Man as created responsibility becomes a reality in the saeculum only on this Christological basis, and his concretion is his obligatory responsibility within the context of his new freedom from the world and for God.

2. Christ: A Theology of Lordship

As the understanding of creation has as its presupposition the New Creation in Christ, so that New Creation has as its presupposition the Lordship of Christ. It is Jesus Christ as Lord who has reconciled man to his Creator and who has, thereby, brought man back into his proper relationship with the creation. Man's reconciliation and, thereby, the world's reconciliation are effected at this one point in the time-line

---

1. This is the title of a most relevant sermon for this study. See Joseph Sittler, The Care of the Earth and Other University Sermons (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), pp. 88-98.

of God's purpose for all time. In this act man and the world have been reconstituted according to God's plan in the original creation. Whatever one says, then, about the created order or its consummation is said on the basis of this central fact of the Lordship of Christ. The world is genuinely the world, the secular is authentically the secular, and man is truly man solely because Christ is Lord of all. It is, therefore, most important that the theme of Lordship should now be explored in terms of its relevance for the secular.

a) The Secular Meaning of Christ

The Lordship of Christ is absolute, but it is not an absoluteness in lofty isolation from man. It is not in terms of his own absolute being that God reveals himself to man, but strangely, and even paradoxically, this revelation of absoluteness is to be found in humanity itself. The absoluteness of God is rooted in the Incarnation, in that free act of God wherein he chooses to become "flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone." In short, the absoluteness of God lies in his free decision to "secularize" himself in Jesus Christ.

> . . . without ever ceasing to be the one true God who cannot be defined and demonstrated by any myth or philosophy, he secularizes himself, he takes on human form and exposes himself to the scorn and mockery of the mythologists and philosophers. Can we not hear the hypocritically pitying irony on Pilate's lips when he proclaims, "Ecce Homo"?[1]

---

[1] Wilhelm Dantine, "The Revelation of Man," The Student World, No. 1 (1963), p. 30. It is Professor Dantine who first employs the concept of the "secularization of God," and while he is not responsible for the conclusions here drawn from such a phrase, the originality is his.

The God of the aeon of aeons reveals himself in the aeon of history to take upon himself the condition of an estranged world in order to give back to it its reality. In this sense one can speak of the secularization of God and the secular meaning of Christ. A distinction must be made here, however, between two forms of secularization. The secularization of the world normally implies:

> . . . the withdrawal of areas of thought and life from religious -- and finally also from metaphysical -- control, and the attempt to understand and live in these areas in the terms which they alone offer.[1]

The secularization of God in the Incarnation is somewhat different in that God acts in Christ in time to desacralize religion and the world and, thereby, to give faith and the earth their proper meaning. At the same time in this act the distinctions between the sacred and the secular are abolished decisively.[2] It would be well to see this activity of God in the Christo-centric perspective of the reformers.

The theological language of the "secularizing" of God is but a modern phrasing of the implications of the traditional doctrine of the Incarnation. John Calvin wrote:

---

[1] Charles West, in a mimeographed account of the proceedings of a study conference sponsored by the World Council of Churches at Bossey, Switzerland, in September 1959.

[2] Comparison should here be made with Gogarten's conviction that the nature of Christian freedom consists in that the world and its institutions are desacralized as man lives in the encounter of the Word. Close similarity can also be seen here in Bonhoeffer's call for a religionless Christianity. Desacralized existence is an opening for faith. It is a movement from a religion of legalism to a freedom for faith. In this sense a right distinction can, therefore, be made between law and gospel. As has already been demonstrated these are the concerns at the heart of Bonhoeffer's appeal for a "non-religious interpretation." While not explicitly using the phrase, it would not be a misinterpretation of both Gogarten and Bonhoeffer to say that they are together with the above interpretation of the "secular meaning" of Christ.

> Because the Holy Spirit who speaks through Paul is so well aware of our weakness, He has used a suitable means of healing in order to meet its needs and has placed the Son in our midst as one of ourselves.[1]

If the creation is understood as that nexus of relationship between man and the world and God, and if sin is the distortion of those relationships, the only manner in which these relationships can be rectified is by divine identification with these very relationships. This would constitute the so-called "secular meaning" of Christ which is none other than the intended meaning of the doctrine of the Incarnation. In other words, Calvin argues that the true manhood of Christ is actually the presupposition of man's relationship with his world and with God. The eternal inheritance which is Christ's is guaranteed to man as his possession because "the Son of God accepted a body like our body, became flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone," "so as to affirm His solidarity with us."[2] This is essentially the same line of argumentation which Luther employs in stressing the fact that there must be a conformitas between Christ and the Christian. This conformitas is not the medieval mystical imitation of Christ. Rather, this conformitas is predicated upon the conviction that what God does in Christ He wills to do in all men.[3]

---

1. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, II, 12, 1.
2. Ibid., II, 12, 2.
3. See Erik Vogelsang, Christusglaube und Christusbekenntnis bei Luther (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1930), p. 99.

It remains to be seen concretely on the basis of scripture how this identification with the structures of man's distorted existence rectifies man's situation in the saeculum.

i) The desacralizing of religion. The earthly career of Jesus is set by the evangelists in the midst of tremendous conflict with the established religious powers of the day. The evangelists are careful to detail the conflict of Jesus with certain institutional practices or legalisms of current Judaism. This can be seen in the controversy over the Sabbath,[1] the interpretation of the law,[2] the institutionalized temple cultus,[3] and the Jewish ancestral pride in being sons of Abraham.[4] Jesus in the midst of controversy is depicted as the great leveller of men. No man stands closer to God by any means of sacralization. This desacralizing is not accomplished by a simple prophetic denunciation on the part of Jesus. His very presence is the center of controversy and the force of the whole descralizing process.

ii) The desacralizing of the world. At the very outset of the ministry of Jesus the evangelists present the scene of his wilderness temptations.[5] The confrontation with demons throughout the ministry of works is an often repeated theme.[6] In every pericope the intention is to show that Jesus renders the cosmic powers of Satan inoperative.

---

1. Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5.
2. Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22; Luke 9:33-39.
3. Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23.
4. Matthew 3:9; Luke 3:8.
5. Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13.
6. E.g., Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39. See also Jesus' controversy with the Pharisees over exorcisms, Matthew 12:23-37; Mark 3:23-30; Luke 11:17-23.

In other words, the presence of Jesus is at the same moment the desacralizing of the world of the cosmic powers which hold it in bondage. Man is once again enabled to be man. The world is able once more to be the world.[1]

iii) The abolition of the secular/sacred dichotomy. In the desacralizing of religion and the world through the presence of Jesus the evangelists and other New Testament writers suggest that the old dichotomy between the secular and the sacred, the profane and the holy, has now been abolished. At the time of the crucifixion the curtain of the holy of holies is torn from top to bottom.[2]

> The temple tore its gown as the mourners did because He, to whom the temple belonged more than to anybody else, was thrown out and killed by the servants of the temple. . . . The curtain which made the temple a holy place, separated from other places, lost its separating power. He who was expelled as blaspheming the temple, had cleft the curtain and opened the temple for everybody, for every moment. This curtain cannot be mended any more, although there are priests and ministers and pious people who try to mend it. They will not succeed because He, for whom every place was a sacred place, a place where God is present, has been brought on the Cross in the name of the holy place. When the curtain of the temple was torn in two, God judged religion and rejected temples. After this moment temples and churches can only mean places of concentration on the holy which is the ground and meaning of every place.[3]

---

[1] James M. Robinson, The Problem of History in Mark (Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1957), has made a most persuasive argument that the entire theological structure of the Gospel of Mark is focused on the conflict of God in Christ with the cosmic powers of evil. For a study of the biblical concept of demonology and the confrontation of Jesus Christ see Helmut Thielicke, Der Glaube der Christenheit (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1958), pp. 445-463.

[2] Mark 15:38.

[3] Paul Tillich, The New Being (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), pp. 177-178.

The author of the Epistle to the Ephesians sees that the event of Christ breaks down the wall of division in life.[1] Central to the author's concern was the relationship between Jew and Gentile, but the "wall of division" has several scriptural antecedents including the division between the secular and the sacred exemplified by the temple curtain.[2] Certainly this is the case when the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews explicitly states that because of Christ's death man now has access to God "through the curtain."[3]

The intention of the desacralizing of religion and the world and the abolition of the secular/sacred dichotomy through the presence of Jesus are to show that the processes of sacralizing and dichotomizing are misunderstandings of man's relationship with God and the world. It is necessary that the world must be sanctified (made clean) of all of these in order for it to know its God-given reality. In this strange, and at times enigmatic, presence of Jesus there is made apparent the real nature of his Lordship. It is a Lordship made possible by the very act of the secularization of God in Christ. Through this event the world, religion and the divisions between the two are secularized in that they are desacralized. But this is not all that must be said of Christ's ministry of presence, for in this presence the world and religion are desacralized so that they might be sanctified.[4] The Lordship of Christ and the secular, which at first seem so far apart, are dialectically joined in a unity which gives a full priority to the Lordship of Christ and full reckoning to the secular without succumbing to any secularistic reduction of the Gospel.[1]

---

[1] Ephesians 2:14.

[2] See Marcus Barth, *The Broken Wall: A Study of the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1959), pp. 39-42.

[3] Hebrews 10:19f.

[4] See Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, pp. 90-91, where this same unity is stressed in order to underscore the reality of the world as secured through the identification of Christ with it. Bonhoeffer, however, did not draw the specific implications for a theology of Lordship from this polemical unity as are sketched above.

b) Christ the Lord of Man

The Lordship of Christ in relation to man cannot be dealt with in the abstract, for that is not the manner in which this Lordship encounters the participants in the New Testament accounts. It is always a Lordship in encounter -- never in abstract power. At this point it is significant to observe that the Word Incarnate is never articulated without a hearer. It is always a Word in encounter.[2] It is always a Word spoken with and to the other. In this sense it is always a Word which imparts its own reality, i.e., grace, and not simply a verbalization, i.e., law, to the other person.[3] It is for this reason that Jesus stands in sharp contrast to the great ethical teachers and philosophers, for their words can be separated from the speaker or from the hearer. In contrast, the words of Jesus never spoken in isolation from man always communicate both the Gabe and the Aufgabe of the Word. In fact the main part of the gospel narratives consists of the description of occasions when individuals or groups of people were confronted with this Word, which was for the hearers a call.

---

[1] See Paul van Buren, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963). Rather than drawing implications for the secular from the Gospel, van Buren has brought to the Gospel a particular scientific, positivistic conception of the secular mind and has imposed this upon the Gospel as a kind of hermeneutic. The result cannot but be a reductionism of the Gospel.

[2] See the earlier treatment in this chapter of the nature of the Word. This is not to say that the Word can never be the Word without man, but it is to say that the Word is always the Word to man in encounter.

[3] Gogarten was correct in seeing that the encounter with the Word had this dual character. The Word called forth man's worthaftig existence and, at the same time, called for his Verantwortlichkeit to God. See chapter V, A, 1, of this dissertation. In the same sense Heim, Jesus the Lord, pp. 169-176, stresses the character of Word-encounter as an "I-Thou" relationship which calls forth the response of the whole person. The presence of the eternal "Thou" in Jesus lays upon man the necessity either of a whole response of obedience or rebellion. The presence of the "Thou" in Jesus is, therefore, that which calls for an acceptance of his Lordship in the reality of the "I" of the person.

The Lordship of Christ in relation to man can never, therefore, be isolated from the Lordship found implicitly in his words. These words are not legalistic commands which are generally associated with commonly understood concepts of lordship. These words are rather encounters which communicate the reality of Christ's Lordship. This Lordship cannot be summarized too hastily as a "freedom for the other man,"[1] but it is a Lordship which calls man to a freedom for the will of God incarnated in the Word and already operative in the world through Christ's universal Lordship. It is this latter aspect of the divine will already operative in the world which causes Paul Lehmann to question any one-sided interpretation of the divine will:

---

[1] The two most notable attempts to phrase a "secular theology" can be seen in Paul van Buren, op. cit., and William Hamilton, The New Essence of Christianity (New York: Association Press, 1961). Both men make much use of Bonhoeffer's phrase "free for the other." Both theologians propose to do theology without a doctrine of God. Hence, it is irrelevant to speak of a freedom for the divine will. What still remains inexplicable for their theologies is the "Whence" of this "freedom." Until the "Whence" can be answered by them on their terms, the question of the "man free for others" will remain as imponderable to modern man as the question of God. Van Buren avoids a theology of Lordship and Hamilton enthusiastically embraces a certain kind of Lordship. What can Lordship mean in his context without a transcendent reference other than an arbitrary selection of the man Jesus? In the end, however, both arrive at the same result. A theology without reference to man's freedom for God can do nothing more with the words of Jesus than to make them into law. That which binds the words of Jesus inseparably to his person is that they through encounter embody grace. Grace, of course, has a transcendent reference. Without this transcendent reference the words are separated from Jesus' person and, thereby, become law.

> To ask simply, "What am I to do?" and simply to reply, "The will of God!" ignores both what God is doing in the world and the ethical reality of the human situation.[1]

This freedom for the will of God incarnated in Christ and operative already in the world is nothing less than man's willingness to assume his worldly or secular responsibility. In this lies true secularity. In this respect Jesus was different from the ordinary rabbi in his call to discipleship. The rabbi's call was to the law, which Jesus had desacralized. It was a call to an "I-It" relationship. Likewise Jesus' call to discipleship was different from those of his day who promised in the name of a messianism a nationalistic kingdom as a reward for obedience. This was an attempt to sacralize the political aspirations of the people. Likewise Jesus' call differed from the apocalyptists who proclaimed the approaching end of the world. This called the disciples to a flight from the world. In contrast, the words of Jesus called men to a discipleship to the Lord who is present in their midst and to a discipleship in the world where God's will is already operating as a freedom from sacralizing bondage and as a liberation from the fear of the future. The messages of both the messianist and the apocalyptist are called in question by Jesus' call to discipleship in the Kingdom. These messages are replaced by the presence or "being there"

---

1. Paul Lehmann, Ethics in a Christian Context (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 80.

of the one who now announces the Kingdom in the present[1] and the claim of this Kingdom upon man as he encounters the Lord in the world.

The major insight which here should be stressed is that the Lordship of Christ in relation to man is neither an individualistic nor authoritarian Lordship. Rather, in the secularization of God in Christ the powers of the law, religion, politics and the cosmos which have held man in bondage have now been deprived of their potency. The Lordship of Christ in relation to man is, therefore, not an individualistic piety of the heart, but it is a Lordship to be found in God's universal secularizing activity in the structures of society and the political activities of a nation. Likewise, this Lordship is not a new form of a compulsive, authoritarian law placed upon man. It is rather a freeing of man for a non-compulsive responsibility in the here and now, in the stuff of the earth, i.e., the _saeculum_. This happens through the presence of Jesus who makes no claim for himself. He does not appear "in miraculous garb, but in the solidarity of the preacher with his hearers."[2] In this unassuming manner he has made the reality of God and the reality of the world as a dialectical unity a reality to man. Without claims for himself Jesus, nevertheless, in his free presence confronts man with an "indirect Christology"[3] -- a new, definitive Lordship. While there is considerable debate regarding Jesus' own self-consciousness, this does not diminish the New

---

[1] See Hans Conzelmann's article, "Jesus Christ," in _Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart_, III (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1961), cols. 631, 642ff.

[2] Ernst Fuchs, "Was wird in der Exegese interpretiert?" in _Gesammelte Aufsätze_ II (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1960), pp. 290f.

[3] Conzelmann, _op. cit._

Testament's response to him as Lord.

> What does it matter whether we answer yes or no to this question, if those who give different replies to it are nevertheless agreed that Jesus was certain that a man's attitude towards him was decisive for his fate . . . . The content of Jesus' claim is not dependent on any claim he may have made to a title.[1]

The Christology of Lordship does not, therefore, lie in the claims which Jesus made about himself. It does not even matter whether a kind of messianic self-consciousness in Jesus can be historically proven. Christology is the result of his freeing presence in the world calling men to God and through Him to a new creation. As Karl Barth writes:

> In the New Testament . . . where do we find a special Christology, a Christ in Himself, abstracted from what He is amongst the men of Israel and His disciples and the world, from what He is on their behalf? Does He ever exist except in this relationship?[2]

One comes to the Lordship of Christ *via* an understanding of his secular meaning. This does not mean, however, that one comes to an understanding of Lordship simply through the humanity of Christ. Presupposed to the secular meaning of Christ is the fact that this truly secular act is at once a divine, transcendent act also. It is rooted in a reality beyond itself. It is the transcendent Lord who acts that his Lordship might be known through his humanity.

---

[1] Paul Althaus, *Das sogennante Kerygma und der historische Jesus* (Gütersloh: Carl Bertelsmann Verlag, 1958), p. 43.

[2] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV, 1, 124.

c) Christ the Lord of the World

The identification of God in Christ with the _saeculum_ for the purpose of restoring the _saeculum_ to its original intended position as creation reaches its final point in the crucifixion and resurrection. The very process of the "secularizing activity of God" necessarily entails the events of the crucifixion and resurrection. In these events the crisis of a sacralized and, therefore, improperly secularized world reaches its final stage. From the human perspective the death of Jesus Christ is to be accounted for in the fact that he set his ministry and his person in direct conflict with a world which had politically and religiously sacralized itself. From the divine perspective the death and resurrection were necessary so that the Lordship of Christ over the world should be established, and in this Lordship the world could become again what it was initially intended to be, i.e., that the world should be the world, the _saeculum_ should be the _saeculum_. The divine activity of God in the crucifixion and resurrection, while on the one hand inaugurating the Lordship of Christ over the world, brings the world back to its original status as creation. Calvin, in traditional theological terminology, presents this twofold, human-divine meaning of the final _kenosis_ in the crucifixion and the ultimate Lordship in the resurrection:

> Because God alone cannot suffer death and man alone cannot overcome it, therefore Christ unites the human with the divine nature, so that for the atonement of our sins He may subject the weakness of the one to the power of death and in the strength of the other endure the struggle with death and obtain victory for us.

---

1. Calvin, _Institutes of the Christian Religion_, II, 12, 3.

A proper theological recovery of the secular cannot evade the doctrine of the Lordship of Christ over the world. It is only in the context of this Lordship that the _saeculum_ becomes what it rightfully is. This means that a theology of the secular cannot reduce itself secularistically to a selected few tenets to the disregard of a balanced theological perspective.[1] A theology of the secular, therefore, cannot avoid the doctrine of the resurrection, for such a theology needs the doctrine of the Lordship of Christ which is predicated upon the resurrection event. The inescapable significance of the resurrection is seen in the fact that it is not until after the resurrection that the term Lord can function in Christian vocabulary. The resurrection inaugurates the new eschatological age of the Lordship of Christ. This is the new reality which those who were drawn positively to Jesus in his "wordly" existence have already participated in proleptically. Certain specific conclusions can, therefore, be drawn regarding Christ's Lordship in the world through the event of the resurrection and the bearing which these conclusions have on a theology of the secular.

The Lordship of Christ through the resurrection is the divine "Yes"

---

1. Serious questions must be raised to William Hamilton's attempt to phrase a "theology of the secular" by resorting methodologically to a "collection of fragments" rather than "structural pretensions." See Hamilton, _op. cit._, pp. 13-20. Hamilton's "new essence of Christianity" bears a resemblance to the rationalistic reductionism of nineteenth and early twentieth century attempts to frame the "essence" of faith. What is needed is not "less theological baggage" but perhaps a new way to carry the weight of the secular in the framework of the total theological task.
2. This is not to ignore the theological and historical problems which are acute in contemporary discourse concerning the resurrection. A treatment of these problems, while necessary in a full systematic treatment of theology, lies outside the direct concern of the argumentation of this dissertation.

to life itself, i.e., to the creation. The creation is not bound to the futile struggle of an endless sacralizing of itself in order to restore itself. That restoration or perfection is not the rightful activity of the created order, for the creation cannot bring itself back into its original Creator-creature relationship. The redemptive activity of God through the Lordship of Christ is required for the restoration of this relationship. The divine "Yes" to creation is at the same moment the inauguration of the New Creation, i.e., the sanctifying of the saeculum.

This divine "Yes" to the creation is simultaneously the restoration of a positive attitude toward the earth, nature and the body. While the resurrection existence may be a different kind of existence than historical existence as such, the resurrection, nevertheless, affirms the somatic quality of this new existence. Earlier in this chapter the inadequacy of Gogarten's response to the process of secularization was indicated in that in this particular theologizing there is a significant absence of the somatic nature of faith.[1] It is precisely this divine "Yes" to the earth and the body, although it be a "new heaven and a new earth," with which Gogarten has been unable to deal adequately, and the problem for Gogarten lies in the limitations which existentialist thought forms place on theological categories. An adequate theology of the secular must include the somatic and cosmic dimensions of the Lordship of Christ, or else it must surrender segments of the world to interpretations of meaning which lie apart from the reality of God's condescension in Christ. The resurrection as the inauguration of the cosmic Lordship of Christ becomes the ground of meaning for the _saeculum_.

---

[1] See chapter V, E, of this dissertation.

That this is a Lordship which extends beyond the boundaries of the church has been forcefully put by Emil Brunner:

> To this extent the idea of the _regnum Christi_ as a universal sphere, which does, of course, _include_ the community of the faithful as its inner most centre, but goes further and takes in unbelieving humanity, is justified. Because Jesus Christ leads the whole of humanity to its goal, His sovereignty is not confined to the circle of those who believe in Him. Because He has been commissioned to do this, "all power has been given unto Him in heaven and on earth." But His Lordship outside the Church is exercised in a wholly hidden way, which we cannot follow. It is only visible to us _sub contraria specie_, . . .[1]

This divine "Yes" of the Lordship of Christ over the world is not without its dialectical relationship to the world. It is not a confirmation of the world as it is in its sacralized and falsely secularized estrangement from its Creator. The divine "Yes" must have gone through a radical "No" before it can eventuate in the "Yes." The "No" through which the "Yes" must go is expressed by Paul in his definitive chapter on the resurrection: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God."[2] The world and its structures cannot be identified with the

---

1. Emil Brunner, _The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, Dogmatics:_ Vol. II, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1952), p. 375. Exception must be taken with Brunner's continuation and elaboration of the theme of the Lordship of Christ outside the church as _sub contraria specie_. Brunner claims that this Lordship is obvious to man only as a form of "non-sovereignty, as the resistance of those who are disobedient to their rightful Lord." While the Lordship of Christ over the world may manifest itself in crypto-forms, one is not obliged to consider these manifestations as hostile to the Lord. Such a consideration cannot but culminate in an objection to all forms of secularization.
2. I Corinthians, 15:50.

Kingdom. Obviously a change is required, but this change is not an annihilation of the creation. The "No" issues ultimately in the "Yes" because the change in the creation through the Lordship of Christ is actually a transformation of the distorted creation. From the "old creation" a "new creation," "a new heaven and a new earth," is fashioned as a transformation.

From these considerations two specific conclusions can be drawn concerning the life of the faithful in the saeculum. It is only on the basis of the Lordship of Christ through the resurrection that man can give genuine and undistorted attention to the "care of the earth." The Christian's "care of the earth" is a care for that which has been transformed and which cannot become again for him a sacralized, idolatrous worship of the creature and the world. Under the Lordship of Christ and the dialectical "Yes" which is spoken to the earth and the natural the Christian knows the reality of the natural or the saeculum. If the Lordship is denied or ignored, the alternative is not genuine Christian secularity but rather a fatal secularism.

Secondly, the affirmation of the Lordship of Christ over the world places upon the Christian the specific responsibility for the saeculum. Because the resurrection event refuses any kind of "spiritualizing" or indulgence in realm thinking, because the resurrection confronts the Christian with the concrete reality of the world as creation, the Christian finds incumbent upon him a responsibility for the creation on behalf of and before the Lord of the creation. Herein, lies the basis for the Christian's genuine secularity.

The theological recovery of the secular demands a fundamental starting point or Grundmotiv which will allow for a unitary perspective for the reality of the creation or the world. In the discussion of the doctrine of creation it was seen that in order to avoid a bifurcating of reality into the realms of nature and grace or a theological schism between law and Gospel or an anthropological division between imago and humanum the one proper starting point was a Christo-centric one. The preceding discussion of Christological issues in terms of a Christology of Lordship provides the elucidation of the theological premise upon which a proper theology of the secular can be constructed. In contemporary Protestant theology Dietrich Bonhoeffer[1] and Karl Barth[2] have more consistently than any other figures called attention to this essential theological truth. Both theologians have followed the initial impetus given to this form of theologizing by the Reformers, Luther[3] and Calvin.[4] The elucidation of this theological premise in the preceding section of this chapter is an attempt to bring the Christological issue into direct relationship with the category of the secular. One additional consideration must be made regarding a Christology of Lordship as the premise for a theology of the secular.

In delineating the "secular meaning of Christ" and his Lordship over humanity and the world the impression could be gained that this is what could be referred to as a "functional Christology." Biblical theologians such as Oscar Cullmann[1] have sought to make sharp distinctions between the functional nature of biblical thought in contrast with the speculative nature of Greek thought. There is much truth in making these distinctions,[2] but the distinctions between "functional" and "speculative" or "ontological" thought need not lead the theologian to make a bifurcation of the two methods of thought. The necessity of holding both the functional and the ontological in close relationship becomes pressing in the discussion of the Lordship of Christ over the world. Functionalism alone is not capable of bearing the full theological weight which is called for at this point. The Lordship of Christ has as its presupposition the identity of Christ in his humiliated and exalted roles with his pre-existence as the creative _Logos_. Even Cullmann sees that biblical Christology must deal with the concept of the _Logos_, but he never brings this concept into direct relationship with the concept of Lordship.[3] Had he done so, he would have seen the necessity of relating the two and thereby would have seen that the two modes of thought cannot be cast into opposition. The theological premise of the Lordship of Christ over the world requires the bringing together of the scriptural motifs of Lordship and _Logos_ which in turn must of necessity require a confrontation with the ontological considerations of the Nicene fathers and the Chalcedonian formula.[4] Only when this critical process of relating both the functional and the ontological considerations has been accomplished can there be an adequate Christology of Lordship which will hold in integral relation creation and the New Creation.

---

[1] See chapter IV, A and B for Bonhoeffer's treatment of Christology in reference to the category of the "natural."

[2] See particularly Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, III, 2, 106ff., 122ff., 158ff., 179ff., for his clearest statements in this respect.

[3] See chapter II, D, 1 for a fuller treatment of Luther at this point.

[4] See chapter II, D, 2 on Calvin at this point.

---

[1] Oscar Cullmann, _Christology of the New Testament_, p. 326, where he specifically claims that the "only" Christology is "functional Christology."

[2] The biblical excursus of chapter II, A, 1 and 2, reveals the relevancy of such distinctions.

[3] Cullmann, _op. cit_.

[4] For some preliminary suggestions in this matter see Alfons Auer, "The Changing Character of the Christian Understanding of the World," _op. cit_., pp. 30-35.

3. Church: A Theology of Servanthood

The Lordship of Christ has as its locus the community of the New Creation, i.e., the *ecclesia*. The desacralizing of religious institutions by Jesus did not mean the abolition of the institution. On the other hand, simply because the Lordship of Christ is in a particular way centered in the church, i.e., it is the community of the New Creation which acknowledges his Lordship, does not in the least limit that Lordship to the church. The church, however, is to be the visible body of Christ in the *saeculum*. A serious theological acknowledgement of the secular dare not ignore the theological importance of the church, for this is the visible witness in the midst of the secular to the Lord of the secular. At the same time, there is not given to the church a special prerogative to sacralize itself as the containment of Christ's Lordship. The church can never, therefore, identify itself with the Kingdom. On the contrary, the church is the eschatological community "between the times" pointing to the Kingdom. When the church claims for itself special status and institutionally sacralizes itself, it becomes an instrument of secularism rather than of the Kingdom.[1] The church as the locus of the Lordship of Christ is the eschatological reality "between the times" and bears in its mission the marks of the crucified and humiliated Lord who so suffered to identify himself with the _saeculum_. The church is, therefore, a servant people. It is as a servant in the form of the body of Christ that the secular relevance of the church is to be found.

---

[1] For contemporary critiques of the church at this point see Martin Marty, *The New Shape of American Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959); John Krumm, *Modern Heresies* (Greenwich: Seabury Press, 1961); and Emil Brunner, *The Misunderstanding of the Church* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953).

The total Servant-Lordship of Christ (Incarnation, life, death, and resurrection) calls into being a new Servant People. In other words, the claim to discipleship which is inherent in the encounter with Jesus as Lord is a claim upon man to watch and wait and suffer _with_ God "in his hour of agony," i.e., in the period "between the times," on behalf of the _saeculum_. This is the basic character of the "new life" in Christ. The New Testament can, therefore, speak of this as the time wherein man "walks in the Spirit,"[1] i.e., it is through the Spirit that the living Lord becomes the eternal and present "Thou" to man. While it is possible theologically to distinguish between Christ and the Spirit,[2] experientially they are one.[3] The Spirit in which man participates is the Spirit of the Suffering Servant-Lord. The form of that participation is through the body of Christ, i.e., the church.

a) The Church as the Body of Christ

The church is that organism[4] established "between the times" of the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord and the final consummation. As an organism it cannot be thought of and accounted for on other grounds than Jesus Christ. This must be understood in the most comprehensive sense: because Jesus Christ is Lord and in that he is Lord, the church is. In other words, the church is because Jesus Christ is and in that he is.[1] Just as Jesus Christ is not Lord without his earthly and historical form, so the church is not the church as his body without Jesus Christ as its head and its Lord. The church, then, cannot be understood as a mere community of free association. The church as the church bears not only its historical form and shape in space and time, but the church in its Christological reality stands within a new, third dimension also. This is the dimension which is created and sustained by the action of the Holy Spirit.[2] In this sense, the church must be understood both as a historical and social reality and as a reality which possesses a dimension transcending time and space.[3] Bishop Aulén in speaking of the church as the body of Christ draws the same conclusion when he writes that the church is

---

[1] Galatians 5:25.
[2] See the apostolic benediction of II Corinthians 13:14.
[3] II Corinthians 3:17-18.
[4] Calvin makes use of the term "organism" in preference to "institution" in order to stress the dynamic nature of the church as the body of Christ. See Calvin, _Institutes of the Christian Religion_, IV, 1, 2.

---

[1] See Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV, 1, 661; IV, 2, 650ff., especially 655, for similar treatment of the basic reality of the church. For Barth the being (Sein) of the church is identical with the being (Sein) of Jesus Christ.

[2] See chapter IV, A, 1, for Bonhoeffer's critique of the church as a group of free association to which this writer would give full concurrence.

[3] See Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV, 1, 656. Barth rightly criticizes Schleiermacher for missing this dimension of the church without which the church could hardly be distinguished from other sociological groupings. See in this regard the treatment of Schleiermacher on the church in chapter II, D, 4, c of this dissertation.

> a heavenly organism, but at the same time perceptible and visible on earth, existing on the border between two worlds, two aeons, having a quality that transcends every present age in history.[1]

At another point Aulén calls the church "a divine creation in the world of men."[2] As with the other events in the Heilsgeschichte, with the church it must be seen that it fully participates in the spatial and temporal dimensions of the saeculum while simultaneously having its real ground in that transcendent dimension which is none other than salvific action of God in Christ. In this sense the church is to be spoken of as the corpus Christi or the regnum Christi. Its reality cannot be accounted for in sociological terms alone, but its fundamental reality is that which was given in and with the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. It is only in this sense that the church can be spoken of as the locus of the Lordship of Christ in the saeculum.

If the reality of the church in the saeculum is to be understood in terms of the corpus Christi, it must also be seen that this reality is in essence an eschatological reality. The church exists "between the times" as the reality of Christ in the world. Within the church is experienced the reality that the old age has passed, and within the church the new age is experienced anticipatorially. This is the present content of the eschatological reality of the church. There is a new order of existence, a dominion, a Lordship, and the church as the

---

1. Gustaf Aulén, Church, Law, and Society (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 16.
2. Gustaf Aulén, The Faith of the Christian Church, trans. Eric Wahlstrom and G. Everett Arden (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948), p. 335.

eschatological reality manifests this reality in its proclamation, sacraments and service. As Bonhoeffer in his early writings emphasized,[1] the church's reality is that which is given, i.e., its "thereness," its objectivity, its being. This being of the church is its concreteness in the world, and that concreteness consists in none other than the concreteness of the Incarnation. Such concreteness defies the Augustinian distinctions between the invisible and visible church, the ideal and the historical church.[2] There is only one reality, and that reality is the Incarnation in Jesus Christ. Upon this basis the church finds its real foundation, and it is upon this same basis that the world finds its reality. That the church and the world are under the same Lordship and rest upon the same reality demonstrates the close and inseparable relationship which the church has with the world. The church as the body of Christ, therefore, demonstrates through its proclamation, sacraments, and service the Lord which it has in common with the world. The reality of the body of Christ must, therefore, be

---

1. See chapter IV, A of this dissertation.
2. Calvin also makes a distinction between the church visible and invisible, but for Calvin this is not a Platonic contrast between the ideal and the historical. Rather, it was essential to speak of the invisible church as a means to include those persons of past ages who have been and still are a part of the body of Christ. In this sense, we do not see the totality of the church. It certainly cannot be said for Calvin that the distinction between visible and invisible is made in order to shield human frailties and weaknesses. See Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, IV, 1, 2, 7. At other points Calvin will make the additional distinction that all those who stand within the visible church are not necessarily participants in its reality. See Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, ibid. In both cases Calvin, while making a distinction, does not intend to separate the church into two realities. It is still the one church from which man cannot separate himself without denying the Lordship of Christ. See Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, IV, 1, 10.

established prior to a consideration of the church's mission to the world.

Eduard Schweizer[1] has suggested, on the other hand, that the nature of the church is to be redefined so that the church becomes identified with its mission. Schweizer finds the spatial imagery of the body of Christ to be too limiting in defining the nature of the church. There is profound truth in understanding the dynamic nature of the church in its mission as Servant in the world, but this recognition should not cloud the fact that the church is and must be at the same time that body which bears witness in its body to the unity which God in Christ has made possible in the world. The church in this sense is a microcosm of God's unifying activity in the world. In this way, the church as the body of Christ becomes the "light of the world."

The Servant People who are the body of Christ are in their essence indicative that in the "secularizing act of God" the world and God have been reconciled and made one under the Lordship of Christ. Therefore the church must have its "marks," and to lose these is to lose the very means of the church's witness to the _saeculum_. These marks are to be seen in its _kerygma_, _latreia_ and _koinonia_. These functions imply that there is a certain distance between the gathered congregation and the _saeculum_. In a very real sense this is true. While even in its gathered reality the Servant People are still creatures of the _saeculum_, there is the sense also in which they are at a distance from all the ties that characterize the secular world. The marks of the church set it at a distance from the world, but this distance is not the church's conscious or unconscious withdrawal from the world. These marks become, rather, the means whereby the church celebrates the Lordship of Christ over the world and calls the world to a recognition of its true reality.

---

[1] Eduard Schweizer, _Lordship and Discipleship_ (Naperville, Illinois: Alec Allenson, Inc., 1960).

The proclamation, fellowship, and service of the church is, therefore, a recognition and celebration of what God has accomplished in his world. This is seen particularly in the church's observance of the Eucharist where the bread and wine of the earth are brought forward as symbols of God's reconciling and sanctifying activity in the world, and, at the same time, as symbolic of man's dedication of himself to the Lordship of Christ through his willingness to be strengthened by a consecrated earth to perform his service of "holy worldliness" in the world.[1] Here in the Eucharist is seen the representation of God's sanctification of the earth and man's inescapable responsibility of being a servant in that same world.

The kerygmatic aspects of the church also celebrate this same reality of God's act and man's service. The Word as proclaimed in the church is not identical with its proclamation in the world. In the congregation it serves a didactic as well as a proclamatory function. Krister Stendahl has drawn attention to this fact when Acts 2:2

---

[1] It is interesting to note that in spite of Calvin's strong emphasis upon the "spiritual quality" of the eucharist, this was not for the Reformer a spiritualizing away of the concrete implications of the sacramental act. The eucharist issues in an agapaic "worldliness" in that the participants are to bind themselves concretely to others in love. "As often as we communicate in the symbol of our Saviour's body, as if a pledge were given and received, we mutually bind ourselves to all the offices of love, that none of us may do anything to offend his brother, or omit anything by which he can assist him when necessity demands, and opportunity occurs." See Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, IV, 17, 44.

> . . . speaks about Teaching rather than Preaching. What we have come to call the *kerygma*, the announcement of the gospel as a creative power to salvation, is in the New Testament directed to the outside world. It is missionary preaching. Within the church this *kerygma* is referred to as the glorious Word by which salvation *was* offered to and accepted by the members of the church. They are now admonished to live accordingly. Even the great Christological truths are not promulgated as a creative *kerygma* to the church; the church is reminded of the grace of God which *came* to them by the gospel and they are urged to draw the consequences thereof in their daily life. Hence the Word is the basis, the Magna Carta, the deed of adoption by which the Christian is what he is and is urged to become what he *really* is in Christ (Romans 6). This is the role of the Word in the Liturgy. It presupposes a clear distinction between the "at home" of the church and its missionary activity where the two-edged sword of the preaching was handled and its judging and saving power manifested itself.[1]

With this recognition of the double-focus of the *kerygma* it should be understood that within the context of the body of Christ the function of proclamation and teaching is to clarify the meaning of the secular world by confrontation with the biblical Word. The utter necessity of the church is hereby seen in the fact that by participation in the reality of Christ, his body, the church is equipped to render an intelligent and suitable witness in the *saeculum*.

---

1. Krister Stendahl, "Theology and Liturgy," *The Living Liturgy*, papers presented at a Conference on Worship by the Department of Worship, United Lutheran Church in America, November 29-30, 1960, p. 13. Quoted in E. S. Brown, Jr., "The Worship of the Church and the Modern Man," *New Theology No. 1*, ed. Martin Marty and Dean G. Peerman (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1964), pp. 189-190.

The function of *koinonia* among the gathered people has a direct relationship with the *saeculum* as well. The dimension of *koinonia* in the church effectively counters the tendency to make the church into a society of individualistic piety and, hence, to "religionize" it. The basic thrust of *koinonia* is to emphasize that the Christian life is not a matter of "I" but "we." In this sense, the *koinonia* of the church serves as a witness to the world of the reconciliation which has been accomplished for the world. The *koinonia* as the fellowship of justification, sanctification and vocation is not an end in itself, but this *koinonia* exists as an empirical pre-figurement of the reality of justification, sanctification and vocation in the world. Without this empirical manifestation of reconciliation within the church, there is no practical basis for the church's mission to the world.

In this consideration of the three aspects of the church's marks as the body of Christ, *latreia*, *kerygma* and *koinonia*, it can clearly be seen that it is not necessary, and indeed it is fatal, to pose "body" and "mission" in antithesis to each other. It is actually the body of Christ on which the mission rests, and on which the safeguard against the church's becoming a sacralized institution over against the *saeculum* is secured. That which was noted in the discussion on Christology in the previous section is to be noted here also. The posing of functional *versus* ontological categories is to be avoided. If the Lordship of Christ is the reality which forms the church and at the same moment undergirds the world, there is then more at stake than a mere function. This Lordship indeed constitutes the *esse* of the church, and without this esse the church's mission to the world would soon evaporate.[1]

b) The Church in the World

The relationship of the church and the world has been a plaguing problem since the earliest Christian era. In the historical survey of this dissertation[2] essentially three attitudes have been deciphered. In the earliest periods of Christianity, i.e., in the pre-Constantinian period, the attitude was basically one in which the church and the world were opposed. This encouraged a world-renunciation. This attitude can be seen not only in the pre-Constantinian period, but it continued in the medieval period in the form of medieval monasticism and the distinctions between monastic clergy and the secular laity. Within Protestantism a similar rejection or withdrawal from the world can be seen in the movement of pietism.

A second attitude was that which marked the Constantinian period and continued through the Middle Ages. This was the attempt to bring the world under the aegis of the church. It has been seen that this is the characteristic approach of the medieval scholastics including

---

[1] That the concept of corpus Christi presents the theologian with many problems which would not be encountered in the more functional manner of identifying the church with "mission" in no way excuses an avoidance of the corpus Christi concept. Once again it is seen that the choice does not have to be made between functional or ontological, but, rather, the functional requires the consideration of esse for its own grounding. In this respect the Lundensian theologians have made major contributions to contemporary ecclesiology. In addition to the works of Gustaf Aulén, see also Anders Nygren, Christ and His Church, trans. Alan Carlsten (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), and This Is the Church, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1952), which is a symposium edited by Nygren.

[2] See chapter II of this dissertation.

Thomas Aquinas. Temporal matters were directly ordered under the spiritual reality of the church, and the result was historic Christendom. In such a relationship between the church and the world in which the church gained dominant control of the world there was the danger that temporal matters would not receive the respect due to them on the basis of their inherent value. The saeculum could not be genuinely the saeculum. It was not allowed even its relative autonomy.

A third attitude was that which appeared in the work of the reformers, Luther and Calvin. Essentially, they sought to relate the church and the world in a dialectical manner. For Luther the dialectic was in terms of the relationship of the two kingdoms and the relationship between law and Gospel. For Calvin the church was situated as a regenerative or leavening force within society. In both Luther and Calvin the fundamental conviction overarching all other concerns was that the absolute Lordship of God in Christ exercised a sovereignty over both church and state, the Christian and the secular in such a pervasive manner that man's responsibility before God must of necessity be fulfilled in his activity in the saeculum. In both reformers distinctions were made between the church and the world, and yet the two were held in unity through the theological conviction of the sovereign Lordship of God in Christ. In such a relationship of unity neither church nor world triumphed over the other, for the position of absoluteness was held by God in Christ as Lord of the world. This resulted in the removal of the medieval hierarchical structure which had produced the antithesis between the worldly life and the monastic withdrawal from the world. In the theological conviction of the sovereign Lordship of Christ over the world there was found the theological basis for a whole-hearted participation in the saeculum as man's vocation before God.

Given the modern situation in which the processes of secularization have spread into virtually all areas of life, what is the church's relationship to the world in a new time? Certainly from the standpoint of the Christian faith the claims of autonomy of modern secularism are to be questioned and challenged. The modern phenomenon of secularism presents a converse alternative to medieval Christendom. Now the world threatens to dominate the church. On the other hand, if the conviction of the cosmic Lordship of Christ is taken with utmost seriousness, the church is confronted with the fact that God in Christ is at work in the structures of the world as well as through his acknowledged Lordship in the church. On this basis a relationship between the two which does not tend to separate but rather unite is now a promising possibility. The church is not only in the saeculum, but given the premise of a common Lordship the church has a vocation of genuine secularity as it identifies as did its Lord with the saeculum.

The true secularity of the church is founded upon the cosmic significance of the Lordship of Christ. This true secularity is to be found in the Christian's expression of his faith in this cosmic reality and his actions predicated upon this faith. Jesus Christ is not just Lord of the church, but he is Lord of the creation. The implication of this conviction is that God in Christ is at work in his world as well as in his church. The true secularity of the church is to be found in its involvement at those points where God is at work in the world.[1]

There are movements of secularization in the world which without specific Christian allegiance bear a marked congruence with Christian secularity. In contrast to secularism this type of secularization might be referred to as "true secularity." Among the characteristics of this "true secularity" is its refusal to accept what Bonhoeffer had also rejected, namely, the premise of the *homo religiosus*. Attendant to the rejection of the religious premise of man is the emphasis upon the "this-worldly" responsibility of man. This is manifested in the stubborn refusal of much of modern secularization to accept the easy answers which seek a religious "escape hatch" from the concrete problems of the changing social order. There is, likewise, in much of modern secularization a type of common-sense empiricism regarding the reality of the world and life in the world.[2] This is seen not only in the physical sciences but also in the political and social arenas as well. In short, there is in much of contemporary secularization a kind of desacralizing process which is in significant agreement with the Christian understanding of the world. What, then, is to be the Christian attitude toward this so-called "true secularity" of the world?

The church as the Servant People of God under the Lordship of Christ is in a position to understand and appreciate this "true secularity" as a part of God's intention for the world. The church's response is, therefore, twofold. First, the church should seek wholehearted identification with those movements which attempt both to accept the world as the world and to live responsibly within that acceptance. To be certain, the Christian accepts this situation for different reasons than the contemporary secularist. The Christian knows that Jesus Christ is the Lord of the world and, hence, the Christian should not be surprised nor defensive when he encounters such situations of "true secularity." In the political movements for national identity, in the struggle for the civil rights of man, in the humanitarian struggles for the alleviation of poverty, disease and ignorance the Christian can discover, though at times risking mistake, where and what God is doing in his world. Horst Symanowski draws attention to this aspect of the Christian's secular responsibility:

---

[1] This point of involvement where God is at work in the world is stressed by M. M. Thomas, *Christian Participation in Nation-Building* (Bangalore: The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1960).

[2] See Gayraud S. Wilmore, *The Secular Relevance of the Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 27.

> Wherever men take responsibility for their fellowmen; wherever men love each other, and bear one another's burdens and disappointments; wherever they are ready to suffer for one another -- there Jesus Christ is already at work. Wherever we discover his work in the midst of secular endeavors we are called to share in it.[1]

The second aspect of the Christian's response to the "true secularity" of the world is to witness. The church's witness or mission is predicated upon the world's redemption in God through the

---

[1] Horst Symanowski, The Christian Witness in an Industrial Society, trans. George H. Kehm (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 114.

Lordship of Christ. If God in Christ is actively involved in the world as well as in the church, a fundamental aspect of the church's witness is to save the "true secularity" from evolving into a secularism. This is always the inherent problem in the process of secularization. As there is in the church a tendency to secularize itself into a sacralized absolute, so there is in secularization the same tendency toward secularistic idolatry. If certain processes of secularization can be identified with the work of God in his world, it is, then, at this point that a pivotal role for Christian witness is to be found. The Christian is to be "the salt of the earth." The Christian's "salt" has too frequently been interpreted to mean a preservation of Christendom in its _status quo_ form and at every possible point a subjugation of the world to this established model. Is this not, however, a "religious" interpretation of Jesus' words? Is not the vital witness of the People of God in dispersion to be the preservative of the world's "true secularity"? If this "true secularity" is maintained, there is always in its character a tentativeness which leaves it open for the "ultimate." Once again, the relevance of Bonhoeffer is to be seen at this point. It is not the Christian's responsibility to reach too quickly with his words to the "ultimate" in his relation to the _saeculum_, for in such haste he may preclude the possibility of the "ultimate" by giving insufficient attention to his essential responsibility in the "penultimate."

The church's relationship to the world is predicated upon the fact that in Christ all divisions have been overcome including the division between the religious and the secular. There are no longer two realms; there is only one, i.e., the creation which has been redeemed and over which Jesus Christ is Lord. Bonhoeffer expressed it thus:

> Sharing in Christ we stand in both the reality of God and the reality of the world. The reality of Christ comprises the reality of the world within itself. The world has no reality of its own independently of the revelation of God in Christ. There are therefore not two spheres, but only one sphere of the realization of Christ, in which the reality of God and the reality of the world are united.[1]

The conclusion cannot be drawn from the preceding argument that due to the reconciliation of the world, distinctions no longer exist between the believer and the non-believer. The distinction between those who know the reality of the world, i.e., the Lordship of Christ, and those who do not still holds. It is this distinction which still gives the church as the body of Christ its stated distance from the world. Yet, this does not encourage a world-withdrawal on the part of the church nor an attempt to seek an existence of its own. Rather, the church as the body of Christ exists for the world, and in this it finds its servant-ministry.

Because the church and the world have as their fundamental reality the reconciliation of God and the world in Jesus Christ, the relationship of the church with the world has been made relative. In its eschatological existence "between the times" the relationship between the two will remain a relative one. The eventual eradication of the distinction between the church and the world is an "ultimate" or eschatological hope.

---

1. Bonhoeffer, Ethics, p. 64.

c) The Church: Secular and Secularized

It is necessary, if the church is to discover its rightful secularity, to distinguish between genuine secularity and spurious secularism.[1] In distinguishing between a rightful secularity of the church and its frequent culturally secularized form one of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's central concerns becomes most relevant. There are definite parallels between religion as Bonhoeffer opposed it and a spurious secularism which has always threatened the church. Bonhoeffer, as had been shown,[2] opposed religion on the grounds that it was an accentuated individualism, an out-dated metaphysics, a compartmentalization of life, and an appeal to the deus ex machina. Bonhoeffer saw these as the central characteristics of conventional Christianity. David Nicholls has captured the spirit and conviction of such conventional religiosity:

> The Church is primarily a religious organization, and the Christian gospel caters for the religious needs of men. . . . It is the job of the church to preach, to pray, to sing hymns and to encourage and develop the pious feelings of its members. . . . Religion is not concerned with the whole of life, but with a part of life.[3]

---

[1] Much confusion could be eradicated in the current American appropriation of insights derived from Bonhoeffer if recognition of the radically different church situation in America in contrast to Europe could be taken into account. Unlike the European church, the American church continues to fulfill certain social and cultural functions now carried on by secular societies in the European context. There is therefore a secular character to the American church which the European church does not possess, and this secular character is not the secularity of which Bonhoeffer speaks and which he commends. It is therefore imperative on the American scene to make this distinction between the true secularity of the church and a spurious secularism which frequently threatens its life.

[2] See chapter IV, C, 3.

[3] David Nicholls, "Your God is Too Big," Prism (July 1961), p. 22.

Here is explicitly stated a concise summary of Bonhoeffer's concept of religion. The church exists to serve the individual in his "religious needs," and these "religious needs" are in reality to be matched with a "religious answer," i.e., the deus ex machina. Religion is neatly separated from the wholeness of life and, thereby, becomes one compartment among others. That this kind of mentality subtly overtakes the church is suggested in Martin Marty's caption, "subliminal secularism."[1]

The fact that religion according to Bonhoeffer's definition does operate as a subliminal secularism insulating man from the reality of the world and isolating him, thereby, from the reality of Christ is stressed by Walter Freytag:

> A man's religious life imprisons him against Christ. His religiousness, far from causing him to be open, makes him on the contrary as if obsessed. His ears are stopped to the message of Christ. . . . The more religious a man is, the less prepared he is to hear.[2]

One factor in the phenomenon of religious secularism which is covert in Bonhoeffer's definition and which needs and is receiving more obvious attention is ecclesiastical institutionalism. While this has many sociological ramifications, it is hardly a non-theological factor. It has been noted in contemporary studies of the institutional factors of religion that the church frequently becomes a closed community within

---

1. Martin E. Marty, Varieties of Unbelief (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 179.
2. Walter Freytag, The Gospel and the Religions (London: S.C.M. Press, 1957), p. 43.

the structures of particular racial, social, economic and political strata of society. In this stratification and enclosurement of the institution the church unconsciously acculturates itself to its given clientele and zealously seeks its own particular institutional self-perpetuation.[1] This is to make that which is relative absolute and to subordinate the absolute claim of the Lordship of Christ upon his Servant People.[2]

When the church indulges in this form of false absolutizing, it is very easy for it to do battle with conventional forms of secularism and to ignore its own secularized shape. Behind this sociological phenomenon of the secularized institution stand clearly the components of Bonhoeffer's "religion." This is not to imply that in the light of Bonhoeffer's rejection of religion the institution is *passé*. It is to suggest, however, that individualistic piety which by nature participates in a realm-thinking mentality requires metaphysical interpretations which have been inherited from the past and are therefore considered sacrosanct. This religiosity easily becomes the seed-bed of that "sublimal secularism" which always threatens the institution of the church.

---

[1] See for such studies Peter Berger, The Noise of Solemn Assemblies (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961); Victor Obenhaus, The Church and Faith in Mid-America (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963); John R. Seeley, et al., Crestwood Heights (New York: Basic Books, 1956) and Gibson Winter, The Suburban Captivity of the Churches (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961).

[2] Among theologians Emil Brunner has been the most pronounced spokesman in opposition to the institutional character of the church. See Brunner, The Misunderstanding of the Church, trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950). Brunner radically separates the institutional form of the church and rejects it in favor of a voluntary fellowship or koinonia. For this reason he has found particular favor with the Mukyokai or Non-Church Movement of Japan. See Brunner, "A Unique Christian Mission: The Mukyokai ("Non-Church") Movement in Japan," in Religion and Culture, ed. Walter Leibrecht (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), pp. 287-290. The emphasis upon the church as a Servant People should in no sense imply, however, that in its mission of diakonia there is no need to make distinctions in kinds of service, and the distinctions inevitably will manifest certain institutional forms. While the New Testament is not conclusive material for determining orders in the church, there is little ground on the basis of the New Testament to conclude that certain distinctions should not be made regarding the service of the laity and the service of the ministry.

4. Consummation: A Theology of Glory

"Between the times" the Servant People of God function as "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." In this way they bear witness to the New Creation effected through Christ. The church therefore participates in the Lordship of Christ as an "already" reality, and yet the church must insist at the same time that there is a "not yet" aspect of his final Lordship. The powers which threaten to bind man have been subjugated to the Lordship of Christ *already*, but they have *not yet* been annihilated. As the Servant People participate in the *already* reality of their freedom from the world and for the world, they are able to understand the character of the "true secularity" and to participate in it with meaning. This is possible because in the reality of the New Creation they proleptically participate in that final triumph of a "new heaven and a new earth." The task of a theological assessment of the secular is incomplete until attention has been given to this final aspect of the Lordship of Christ.

Why should a theology of the secular insist upon the importance of a final, future consummative act of God? Is this not an escape from the present age and the present world, i.e., the saeculum?[1] To the contrary, rather than diminishing Christian responsibility in the present, eschatological faith intensifies that responsibility. Indeed, without some understanding that history's consummation has a meaning, the saeculum is left with only the alternative of turning to secularism in one of its many forms for its ultimate interpretation. It is the Christian affirmation that the saeculum has an ultimate destiny which is part of God's eternal plan in Christ which gives the possibility of meaning to secular activity. The Christian finds the meaning of the saeculum from the point of his deliverance in the event of Jesus Christ. Total meaning, however, is to be revealed from the end-point which the believer can only anticipate from the reality which already he knows.

At the same time, the anticipation of the final, consummative Lordship of Christ delivers the saeculum from absolutizing its achievements.[2] The best efforts of the saeculum are only an approximation of the will and purpose of God for his creation.

---

[1] It has been seen in the earlier historical survey of this dissertation what happens when an accentuated apocalypticism grips the mind of man and obscures the other events of the Heilsplan. The early withdrawal movements of the hermits was motivated by this apocalypticism. See II, C, 2.

[2] There is a kind of overly-zealous appreciation of the achievements of secularization to which objection must be voiced. For example, in Gibson Winter's, The New Creation as Metropolis, the vision of Revelation 21 is employed as a justification for Winter's own enthusiastic reception of the modern phenomenon of urbanization. Daniel Gollancz in his review of Winter's book has rightly registered surprise, if not overt criticism, of this tendency. See Daniel Gollancz, Revue d'historie et de philosophie religieuses, Vol. 44 (1964), p. 153.

a) The Meaning of Consummation

When Christian theology speaks of the "end of history" or consummation, it is not speaking of the annihilation of the saeculum, for as can be seen from what has been said previously, this would be an annihilation of God's good creation. It would be more accurate to speak of the consummation or fulfillment of the saeculum. In short, the consummation implies the fulfillment of purpose of everything which has gone before. The "new heaven and the new earth" of which Revelation speaks is the renewed and transformed creation as it emerges when God's purpose for it is complete.[1]

Reinhold Niebuhr's description of the fulfillment of time[2] is most helpful at this point. Niebuhr contends that man views the "end" either as *finis*, a complete and abrupt break with that which has gone before, or as *telos*, that point toward which all of life is directed and in which it finds its ultimate meaning. Under the pressure of the *finis* man finds it necessary to produce all kinds of "false eternals," to use Niebuhr's terms, or in the more specific terms of this study, man finds it necessary to produce a secularism to give momentary meaning. In contrast to this understanding of time, the Christian understands history in the light of a *telos*, a cumulative point in which all past moments and the future are present. It follows that it is a mistaken idea to consider in the Christian context the "end" as a point in time.

---

[1] Howard Kee, *The Renewal of Hope* (New York: Association Press, 1959), pp. 110-111.

[2] Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), pp. 287-288.

The "end" is not an event of history at all -- it is history's *con-summation*. It is the task of theology to speak of this *con-summation* of purpose rather than to speculate about and to reconcile theological statements with the theories of physical science regarding the end of the world.[1] Within a theological context what is meant by consummation can be seen in the doctrine of the Lordship of Christ. His Lordship is inaugurated through the ministry, death and resurrection (past), it is experienced as his Servant-Lordship through the church and in the *saeculum* (present), this Lordship becomes fully revealed as a Lordship of Glory (future).[2] Consummation is the entirety of Christ's reigning Lordship. In a proleptical sense this is focused in the Eucharistic observance of the community where God is present, he is

---

1. See Karl Heim, *The World: Its Creation and Consummation*, for an example of correlating biblical material and the theories of the physical sciences. This amounts to a confusion of the theological task and betrays unnecessary defensiveness in the face of physical science.
2. See section C, 2 of this chapter. The insistence upon the futuristic dimension of Christ's Lordship is made in spite of J. A. T. Robinson's suggestions that the doctrine cannot be confined to "a single moment at the end of time." Bishop Robinson pleads for a theology which recognizes that every moment is surrounded "with all the seriousness of the Last Day." See J. A. T. Robinson, *Jesus and His Coming* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960). Certainly faith in the future consummation does not have to result in a kind of spiritual "observer corps," straining with the eyes for a divine air raid or cosmic catastrophe. This is the language of Bishop Robinson's more popularized treatment of the theme in *On Being the Church in the World* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962). The New Testament doctrine of the *parousia* suggests all that "consummation" implies. It is neither exclusively futuristic nor can it be compressed into a single existential moment. It is the better interpretation of the biblical material to speak of the consummation dialectically -- as that which is "already" and still completely "not yet." In this regard see H. A. Guy, *The New Testament Doctrine of Last Things* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948) and the very significant study of Alan Galloway, *The Cosmic Christ* (London: James Nisbet and Company, 1951).

remembered (past), and he is anticipated (future).

b) The Consummation in the Light of Christ

There is a continuity between the original creation and the final consummation of the world. This continuity can be understood only from the standpoint of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The man who experiences deliverance and forgiveness of his sins in the present knows that this is the same God in Christ through whom the world was made (Colossians 1:15-16) and who will in the end be "all in all." The consummation, however, is not limited to mankind. Just as in the Old Testament perspective mankind and the creation stand in an inseparable relationship and just as there the creation is involved consequentially in the disobedience of man, so in the consummation creation, as well as man, plays an essential role. Paul has underscored this:

> For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God.[1]

In other words, consummation is not an ephemeral act but one with somatic and material implications. This belief is grounded in the Christian understanding of the Incarnation. The consummation viewed in the light of Christ carries the same somatic and material implications as does the Incarnation. "The present state of this world will

---

1. Romans 8:19-21.

pass away" (I Corinthians 7:31), but this "passing away" is to make possible a "new earth." The "passing away" does not break the continuity which the consummation has with the original creation. To affirm the opposite is to run dangerously close to the Marcionite heresy! Paul claims that the "whole creation" is waiting in travail for the new advent of its Lord (Romans 8:23). The consummation, as with creation and incarnation, has cosmic dimensions.

Theology experiences severe difficulties in speaking of the consummation, as in a similar manner it experiences difficulties in speaking of creation. Like creation, the consummation is not a point in the line of time itself. Creation and consummation are respectively the beginning and the end of the time-line. While these are spoken of as events, they are not points within time itself. This has led theologians to speak of the consummation as the _telos_ which lies beyond history. There is both theological truth and error in such statements. The theological truth of the statement lies in the insistence that the consummation for which the whole creation waits is God's consummation; man does not bring it into being; history does not evolve it. The error lies in interpreting this to mean that there is no hope for history or the world as the _saeculum_. If this conclusion be drawn from the conviction that consummation is beyond history, this leaves the _saeculum_ in the throes of the enslaving powers. This hardly makes sense of the liberation which now the Christian knows in Christ's Lordship "between the times," and it hardly commends itself to understanding the nature of the complete liberation when these powers are annihilated in the consummation. In short, consummation ceases to be consummation. It is not the powers which are annihilated, but rather the saeculum itself is annihilated. Needless to say, theologians have not meant the latter when they have spoken of consummation as beyond history. To the church which already knows in anticipation or hope, the meaning of the consummation beyond history or time lies in the fact that no one knows the day nor the hour. The "creation waits with eager longing. . ."

c) The Secular Meaning of Consummation

The secular meaning of consummation can be understood in two ways. First, what does belief in consummation say to the saeculum, that nexus of time, nature and man "between the times"? As has already been pointed out, the consummation offers meaning to secular activity in that this activity can be seen within the scope of an all-embracive purpose of God for the saeculum running from creation to consummation and focused specifically in the event of Christ. At the same time consummation serves the saeculum in freeing it from closing upon itself and seeking its meaning within itself. In the first instance, the consummation gives depth of purpose to the saeculum, and in the second instance, the consummation keeps the saeculum open, i.e., it keeps it a genuine secularity, to the future.

The consummation has an additional secular meaning. If the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are to be understood as God's secularizing activity, in what sense is the consummation a part or the telos of this secularizing activity? It has been contended that God secularizes himself in order that the world may be desacralized and sanctified, i.e., that the world and man may be re-established for what they truly are, namely, the creation. The secularizing activity of God is seen, therefore, as the bringing into subjugation to the Lordship of Christ the powers which threaten man's authentic secularity. The consummation marks the completion of this secularizing activity of God in Christ. In the consummation the powers which threaten man are annihilated in a final sense, and in the same manner the world is desacralized. In this way the world is truly and completely sanctified. The consummation can, therefore, be spoken of as the completion of God's secularization and sanctification of the world. It is this for which the creation in hope awaits:

> And I saw no temple therein for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.[1]

---

[1] Revelation 21:22.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Abrecht, Paul
The Churches and Rapid Social Change.
Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961.

Acton, Lord J. E. D.
History of Freedom.
London: Hollis and Carter, 1962.

Allen, E. L.
Jesus Our Leader: A Guide to the Thought of Karl Heim.
London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1948.

Althaus, Paul
Das sogennante Kerygma und der historische Jesus.
Gütersloh: Carl Bertelsmann Verlag, 1958.

Aquinas, St. Thomas
Summa contra gentiles. Translated by James F. Anderson.
New York: Image Books, 1956.

Auer, Alfons, *et al.*
The Christian and the World: Readings in Theology.
New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons, 1965.

St. Augustine
The City of God. Translated by G. G. Walsh, S.J.; D. B. Zema, S.J.;
Grace Monahan, O.S.U., and D. J. Honan.
New York: Doubleday and Company, 1958.

Aulén, Gustaf
Church, Law and Society.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948.

The Faith of the Christian Church. Translated by Eric H. Wahlstrom
from *Den allmänneliga kristna tron.* 4th ed.

Baillie, John
What is Christian Civilization?
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945.

Barr, James
The Semantics of Biblical Language.
London: Oxford University Press, 1961.

Barth, Karl
Church Dogmatics, I, 1-IV, 3, eds. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance.
Translated from *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, I, 1-IV, 3, 1932-1959.
Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936-1962.

Fides quaerens intellectum. Translated by I. W. Robertson from
Fides quaerens intellectum. 2. Aufl.
Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960.

God, Grace and Gospel. Translated by J. Strathern McNab.
Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No. 8.
Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., 1959.

Karl Barth's Table Talk. Recorded and edited by John Godsey.
Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No. 10.
Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., 1963.

The Knowledge of God and the Service of God. Translated by J. L. M.
Haire and I. Henderson.
Napierville, Illinois: Alec Allenson, 1955.

Natural Theology (Comprising "Nature and Grace," by Emil Brunner and
"No," by Karl Barth). Translated by P. Fraenkel.
London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946.

Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl. Translated by Brian
Cozens from eleven chapters of *Die protestantische Theologie im
19. Jahrhundert*.
New York: Harper and Row, 1959.

Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert.
Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1952.

Theology and Church. Translated by Louise Pettibone Smith from
Die Theologie und die Kirche (Gesammelte Vorträge 2).
New York: Harper and Row, 1962.

Beaucamp, Évode
The Bible and the Universe.
London: Burns and Oates, 1962.

Becker, Carl
The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers.
New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932.

Barth, Karl
Church Dogmatics, I, 1-IV, 3, eds. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance. Translated from *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, I, 1-IV, 3, 1932-1959.
Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936-1962.

Fides quaerens intellectum. Translated by I. W. Robertson from *Fides quaerens intellectum*. 2. Aufl.
Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960.

God, Grace and Gospel. Translated by J. Strathern McNab.
Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No. 8.
Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., 1959.

Karl Barth's Table Talk. Recorded and edited by John Godsey.
Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers No. 10.
Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., 1963.

The Knowledge of God and the Service of God. Translated by J. L. M. Haire and I. Henderson.
Napierville, Illinois: Alec Allenson, 1955.

Natural Theology (Comprising "Nature and Grace," by Emil Brunner and "No," by Karl Barth). Translated by P. Fraenkel.
London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946.

Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl. Translated by Brian Cozens from eleven chapters of *Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert*.
New York: Harper and Row, 1959.

Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert.
Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1952.

Theology and Church. Translated by Louise Pettibone Smith from *Die Theologie und die Kirche* (Gesammelte Vorträge 2).
New York: Harper and Row, 1962.

Beaucamp, Évode
The Bible and the Universe.
London: Burns and Oates, 1962.

Becker, Carl
The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers.
New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932.

von Below, G.
Die Bedeutung der Reformation für die politische Entwicklung.
Dresden: Teubner, 1918.

Bethge, Eberhard (ed.)
Die mündige Welt. Dem Andenken Dietrich Bonhoeffers, I-IV.
München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1955-1963.

Beyschlag, Karlmann
Die Bergpredigt und Franz von Assisi.
Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1955.

Biéler, André
The Social Humanism of Calvin. Translated by Paul T. Fuhrman from *L'humanisme social de Calvin.*
Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964.

Black, Matthew
The Scrolls and Christian Origins.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.

Bohatec, J.
Calvin und das Recht.
Feudingen: Buchdruck und Verlags-Anstalt, 1934.

Boman, Thorlief
Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek. Translated by Jules Moreau from *Das hebräische Denken im Vergleich mit dem Griechischen.* 2. Aufl.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960.

Bonhoeffer, Deitrich
Act and Being. Translated by Bernard Noble from *Akt und Sein.*
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962.

The Communion of Saints. Translated by R. Gregor Smith from *Sanctorum Communio.*
New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

The Cost of Discipleship. Translated by R. H. Fuller from *Nachfolge.*
New York: Macmillan, 1948.

Creation and Fall. Translated by John C. Fletcher from *Schöpfung und Fall.*
London: SCM Press, 1959.

Ethics. Translated by Neville Horton Smith from *Ethik.* 1. Aufl.
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955.

Gesammelte Schriften, I-IV.
München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1961.

Life Together. Translated by John W. Doberstein from *Gemeinsames Leben*.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954.

Prisoner for God. Translated by R. H. Fuller from *Widerstand und Ergebung*.
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1954.

Temptation. Translated by Kathleen Downham from *Versuchung*.
London: SCM Press, 1955.

Bourbeck, Christine and Wendland, Heinz-Dietrich (eds.)
Diakonie zwischen Kirche und Welt.
Hamburg: Furche-Verlag, 1958.

Brunner, Emil
Erlebnis, Erkenntnis und Glaube.
Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1923.

The Misunderstanding of the Church. Translated by Harold Knight from *Das Missverständnis der Kirche*.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953.

Bruns, Hans
Ein Reformer nach der Reformation: Leben und Wirken P. J. Spener.
Marburg: Spener-Verlag, 1937.

Buber, Martin
Between Man and Man. Translated by Ronald Gregor Smith.
Boston: Beacon Press, Inc., 1955.

I and Thou. Translated by Ronald Gregor Smith from *Ich und Du*. 2. Aufl.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937.

Bultmann, Rudolf
Existence and Faith. Translated and edited by Schubert Ogden.
New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1960.

Theology of the New Testament. 2 vols. Translated by K. Grobel from *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.

Burger, Francis
Karl Heim as Apologeet.
Franeker, Netherlands: T. Wever, 1954.

Burtness, James and Kildahl, John (eds.)
The New Community in Christ.
Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965.

Butterfield, Herbert
The Origins of Modern Science.
New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951.

Buttrick, George (ed.)
The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. 4 vols.
New York: Abingdon Press, 1962.

Calvin, John
Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets, I-IV. Translated from the original Latin by John Owen.
Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950.

Institutes of the Christian Religion. Translated by F. L. Battles.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960.

von Campenhausen, Hans
Lateinische Kirchenväter.
Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1960.

Carlson, Edgar M.
The Reinterpretation of Luther.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948.

Carrington, Philip
The Early Christian Church. 2 vols.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959.

Casserley, J. V. Langmead
The Retreat from Christianity in the Modern World.
London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1951.

Cassirer, Ernst
Determinism and Indeterminism in Modern Physics. Translated by O. Theodor Benfey.
New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956.

Channing-Pearce, M.
The Terrible Crystal: Studies in Kierkegaard and Modern Christianity.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1941.

Dilthey, Wilhelm
Leben Schleiermachers.
Berlin: Reimer, 1870.

Dodd, C. H.
The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953.

Douglass, Paul F.
God Among the Germans.
Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935.

Ebeling, Gerhard
The Nature of Faith. Translated by R. G. Smith from *Das Wesen des christlichen Glaubens.*
Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961.

Word and Faith. Translated by James W. Leitch from *Wort und Glaube.*
London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1963.

Ebersole, M. C.
Christian Faith and Man's Religion.
New York: Thomas Crowell, 1961.

Ehrenstrom, Nils
Christian Faith and the Modern State.
Chicago: Willett, Clark and Company, 1937.

Eisenhuth, H. E.
Die Entwicklung des Problems der Glaubensgewissheit bei Karl Heim.
Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1928.

Ellul, Jacques
The Technological Society. Translated by John Wilkinson from *La Technique ou l'enjeu du siècle.*
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964.

Farley, Edward
The Transcendence of God: A Study in Contemporary Philosophy Theology.
Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958.

Felder, P. Hilarin
Die Ideale des hl. Franziskus von Assisi.
Paderborn: Druch und Verlag von Ferdinand Schöningh, 1924.

Figgis, J. N.
Studies of Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius, 1414-1625.
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923.

St. Francis
The Mirror of Perfection. Translated by Robert Steele.
New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1951.

Freytag, Walter
The Gospel and the Religions.
London: S.C.M. Press, 1957.

Friedman, Maurice
Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955.

Fröhlich, Karl
Gottesrecht, Welt, und Kirche bei Calvin.
Munich: Reinhardt, 1930.

Fuchs, Ernst
Gesammelte Aufsätze, II
Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1960.

Galloway, Alan
The Cosmic Christ.
London: James Nisbet and Company, 1951.

Gilkey, Langdon
Maker of Heaven and Earth.
New York: Doubleday and Co., 1959.

Goad, Harold
The Story of Francis and His Followers.
London: John Westhouse, 1947.

Godsey, John D.
The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960.

Gogarten, Friedrich
Demythologizing and History. Translated by N. H. Smith from
Entmythologisierung und Kirche.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.

Glaube und Wirklichkeit.
Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1928.

Ich glaube an den dreieinigen Gott.
Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1928.

Die Kirche in der Welt.
Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1948.

Der Mensch zwischen Gott und Welt. 3. Aufl.
Stuttgart: Friedrich Vorwerk Verlag, 1956.

Politische Ethik.
Jena: Eugen Diederich Verlag, 1932.

The Reality of Faith. Translated by Carl Michalson, *et al*., from
Die Wirklichkeit des Glaubens.
Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959.

Die religiöse Entscheidung.
Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1921.

Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit. 2. Aufl.
Stuttgart: Friedrich Vorwerk Verlag, 1958.

Die Verkündigung Jesu Christi.
Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1948.

Grisebach, Eberhard
Gegenwart: Ein kritische Ethik.
Halle-Saale: Max Niemeyer, 1928.

Grünberg, Paul
Philipp Jacob Spener.
Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1893-1906.

Guardini, R.
Das Ende der Neuzeit.
Basel: Hess Verlag, 1950.

Guy, H. A.
The New Testament Doctrine of Last Things.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1948.

Hallesby, Ole
Den Kristelige Troslaere.
Kristiana: Luther-Stiftelsens Forlag, 1921.

Hâmer, Jerome, O.P.
Karl Barth.
Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1962.

Hamilton, William
The New Essence of Christianity.
New York: Association Press, 1961.

Hammelsbeck, O.
Die veränderte Weltsituation des modernen Menschen als religiöses Problem.
München: Kaiser Verlag (*Theologische Existenz heute*), 1955.

Harkness, Georgia
The Modern Rival of Christian Faith: An Analysis of Secularism.
Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1952.

von Harnack, Adolf
Outlines of the History of Dogma. Translated by Edwin Knox Mitchell.
Boston: Beacon Press, 1957.

Hauss, Friedrich
Karl Heim: Der Denker des Glaubens.
Giessen: Brunnen-Verlag, 1960.

-------------
Väter der Christenheit.
Wuppertal: Verlag Sonne und Schild, 1959.

Hay, Denys
The Medieval Centuries.
London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1953.

Heim, Karl
Die Bergpredigt Jesu in ihrer praktischen Gegenwartsbedeutung.
Hamburg: Furche-Verlag, 1959.

-------------
Christian Faith and Natural Science. Translated by N. H. Smith from *Der christliche Gottesglaube und die Naturwissenschaft, I, Grundlegung.* 1. Aufl.
London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1953.

-------------
Die christliche Ethik: Tubingen Vorlesungen.
Tubingen: Katzmann-Verlag, 1955.

-------------
Deutsche Staatsreligion, oder Evangelische Volkskirche.
Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1933.

-------------
Das Gewissheitsproblem in der systematischen Theologie bis zu Schleiermacher.
Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1911.

-------------
Glaube und Denken: Philosophische Grundlegung einer christlichen Lebensanschauung.
Berlin: Furche-Verlag B.m.b.H., 1931.

Glaube und Leben: Gesammelte Aufsätze und Vorträge.
Berlin: Furche-Verlag, 1926.

Glaubensgewissheit: Eine Untersuchung über die Lebensfrage der Religion.
Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1916.

Glaubensgewissheit: Eine Untersuchung über die Lebensfrage der Religion.
Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1923.

God Transcendent. Translated by E. P. Dickie from Glaube und Denken. 4. Aufl.
London: James Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1935.

The Gospel of the Cross: A Second Series of Sermons. Translated by John Schmidt.
Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1937.

Ich gedenke der vorigen Zeiten.
Hamburg: Furche-Verlag, 1957.

Jesus the Lord: The Sovereign Authority of Jesus and God's Revelation in Christ. Translated by D. H. van Daalen from Jesus der Herr; Die Herrschervollmacht Jesu und die Gottesoffenbarung in Christus. 4. Aufl.
Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd Ltd., 1959.

Jesus the World's Perfecter: The Atonement and the Renewal of the World. Translated by D. H. van Daalen from Jesus der Weltvollender: Der Glaube an die Versöhnung und Weltverwandlung.
Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959.

Die Kraft Gottes: Predigten.
Stuttgart: Quell-Verlag der Ev. Gesellschaft, 1936.

Die lebendige Quelle: Predigten.
Tübingen: Osiander'sche Buchhandlung, 1927.

The Transformation of the Scientific World View. Translated by W. A. Whitehouse from Der Christliche Gottesglaube und die Naturwissenschaft, II; Die Wandlung im naturwissenschaftlichen Weltbild. 1. Aufl.
London: SCM Press Ltd., 1953.

The World: Its Creation and Consummation. Translated by Robert Smith from *Weltschöpfung und Weltende.*
Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962.

Heisenberg, Werner
The Physical Principles of the Quantum Theory. Translated by Karl Eckhard and Frank Hoyt.
New York: Dover Press, 1930.

Henderson, Ian
Can Two Walk Together? The Quest for a Secular Morality.
London: Nisbet and Company, Ltd., 1948.

Hillerdal, Gunnar
Gehorsam gegen Gott und Mensch: Luthers Lehre von der Obrigkeit und die moderne evangelische Stattethik.
Stockholm: SKDB, 1955.

Hirsch, Emmanuel
Geschichte der neuern Evangelischen Theologie in Zusammenhang mit den allgemeinen Bewegungen des Europäischen Denkens.
Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1949-1952.

Hodges, H. A.
Christianity and the Modern World View.
London: S.P.C.K., 1962.

Holmer, Paul L.
Theology and the Scientific Study of Religion.
Minneapolis: Denison, 1961.

Horton, Walter Marshall
Contemporary Continental Theology.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1938.

de Huszar, George B. (ed.)
The Intellectuals.
Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1960.

Jarrett-Kerr, Martin
The Secular Promise.
Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964.

Jenkins, Daniel
Beyond Religion.
Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962.

Jörgensen, Johannes
St. Francis of Assisi. Translated by T. O. Sloane.
London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1912.

Kallen, Horace Meyer
Secularism is the Will of God.
New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1954.

Kamlah, Wilhelm
Der Mensch in der Profanität.
Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1949.

Kee, Howard
The Renewal of Hope.
New York: Association Press, 1959.

Kelly, J. N. D.
Early Christian Doctrine.
New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959.

Kirsopp-Lake (ed.)
The Apostolic Fathers. 2 vols.
London: W. Heinemann, 1919.

Kittel, Gerhard (ed.)
Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament.
Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934.

Klages, Ludwig
Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele.
Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1929.

Knight, George A. F.
A Christian Theology of the Old Testament.
Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1959.

Knudson, Albert C.
The Principles of Christian Ethics.
New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943.

Kroner, Richard
Speculation and Revelation in the Age of Christian Philosophy.
Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959.

Künneth, Walter
Glauben an Jesus? Die Begegnung der Christologie mit der modernen Existenz.
Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1962.

Kunst, Hermann and Heilfurth, Gerhard (eds.)
Wir sind gefordert.
Berlin: Verlag Herbert Renner, 1954.

Lackeit, C.
Aion, Zeit und Ewigkeit in Sprache und Religion des Griechen, I.
Leipzig: T. G. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1916.

Lehmann, Paul
Ethics in a Christian Context.
New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

Leibrecht, Walter (ed.)
Religion and Culture: Essays in Honor of Paul Tillich.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959.

Lietzmann, Hans
The Era of the Church Fathers. Translated by Bertram Lee Woolf.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952.

Löwith, Karl
Meaning in History.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949.

Luther, Martin
Luther's Works, 21. Edited and translated by Jaroslav Pelikan.
Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956.

Mackintosh, H. R.
Types of Modern Theology.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937.

Mandonnet, P.
Siger de Brabant et l'averoisme latin au XIIIème siècle. 2nd ed., 2 vols.
Louvain: Institut supérieur de philosophie de l'Université, 1908, 1911.

Marcel, Gabriel
Man Against Mass Society.
Chicago: Regnery, 1962.

Marty, Martin
The New Shape of American Religion.
New York: Harper and Row, 1959.

----------------(ed.)
The Place of Bonhoeffer.
New York: Association Press, 1962.

Varieties of Unbelief.
New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.

Marty, Martin E. and Peerman, Dean G.(eds.)
New Theology No. 1.
New York: The Macmillan Co., 1964.

New Theology No. 2.
New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965.

Mascall, E. L.
Christian Theology and Natural Science.
New York: Ronald Press, 1956.

Michalson, Carl
The Hinge of History.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959.

The Rationality of Faith.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963.

Mollegen, Albert T.
Christianity and Modern Man: The Crisis of Secularism.
Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1961.

Moltmann, Jürgen (ed.)
Anfänge der dialektischen Theologie, II.
München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1963.

Herrschaft Christi und soziale Wirklichkeit nach Dietrich Bonhoeffer.
München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1959.

Morey, Charles R.
Medieval Art.
New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1942.

Mueller, Hanfried
Von der Kirche zur Welt: ein Beitrag zu der Beziehung des Wortes Gottes auf die societas in D. Bonhoeffers theologischer Entwicklung.
Leipzig: Koehlert Amelang, 1961.

Mueller, William A.
Church and State in Luther and Calvin.
Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954.

Mueller-Gangloff, Erich
Horizonte der Nachmodernen.
Stuttgart: Verlagsgemeinschaft Burckhardthaus- und Kreuz-Verlag Gehenhausen, 1962.

Müller-Schwefe, H. R.
Der Standort der Theologie in unserer Zeit.
Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1958.

Munby, D. L.
The Idea of a Secular Society and Its Significance for Christians.
London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Neve, J. L.
Churches and Sects of Christendom.
Blair, Nebraska: Lutheran Publishing House, 1944.

Niebuhr, H. Richard
Christ and Culture.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951.

The Meaning of Revelation.
New York: Macmillan and Company, 1941.

Niebuhr, Reinhold
The Nature and Destiny of Man, II.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943.

Nygren, Anders
Agape and Eros. Translated by Philip S. Watson.
Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953.

Nygren, G.
Das Prädestinationsproblem in der Theologie Augustins.
Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1956.

Ott, Heinrich
Geschichte und Heilsgeschichte in Theologie Rudolf Bultmanns.
Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1955.

Partridge, Eric
Origins: The Encyclopedia of Words: Their Meanings, Etymology and Uses Through History.
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958.

Pegis, Anton C. (ed.)
Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas.
New York: Random House, 1945.

Philipp, Wolfgang
Das Werden der Aüfklarung in Theologie geschichtlicher Sicht.
Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1957.

Pieper, Josef
Guide to Thomas Aquinas. Translated by R. and C. Winston from *Hinführung zu Thomas von Aquin.*
New York: Mentor-Omega Books, 1964.

Scholasticism: Personalities and Problems of Medieval Philosophy.
Translated by Richard and Clara Winston from *Scholastik.*
New York: Pantheon Books, 1960.

Pinson, Koppel S.
Pietism as a Factor in the Rise of German Nationalism.
New York: Columbia University Press, 1934.

Preuschen, E.
Untersuchungen zum Diatessaron Tatians.
Heidelberg: Akademie Heidelbergs, 1915.

von Rad, Gerhard
Genesis: A Commentary. Translated by John H. Marks from *Das erste Buch Mose, Genesis.*
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961.

Raven, Charles
Science and Religion.
Cambridge: The University Press, 1953.

Reitzenstein, Richard
Des Athanasius Werk über das Leben des Antonius.
Heidelberg: Sitzungs ber. Heidelberg Akademia, 1914.

Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Mönchtums und der frühchristlichen Begriffe Gnostiker und Pneumatiker.
Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1916.

Richard, M. E.
P. J. Spener and His Work.
Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1897.

Richardson, Alan
Christian Apologetics.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947.

Rietveld, Dr. B.
Saecularisatie als Probleem der Theologische Ethiek.
S'-Gravenhage: Uitgeverig van Keulen N.V., n.d.

Ritschl, Albrecht
Geschichte des Pietismus.
Bonn: Marcus, 1880-1886.

Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James D., (ed.)
The Ante-Nicene Fathers.
Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956.

Robinson, John A. T.
Honest to God.
London: SCM Press Ltd., 1963.

Jesus and His Coming.
New York: Abingdon Press, 1960.

On Being the Church in the World.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962.

Rotermund, Hans-Martin
Orthodoxie und Pietismus.
Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1960.

Rupp, Gordon
The Righteousness of God.
London: Hodder, 1953.

Ruttenbeck, W.
Die Apologetisch-Theologische Methode Karl Heims.
Leipzig: A Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Dr. Werner Scholl, 1925.

Sabatier, Paul
Vie de S. Francois d'Assise.
Paris: Fischbacher, 1931.

Schleiermacher, Friedrich
The Christian Faith. Translated by H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart from *Der christliche Glaube.* 2. Aufl.
Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1928.

Dialektik.
Leipzig: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1903.

On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers. Translated by John Oman from *Reden Über die Religion.* 3d. revised ed.
New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958.

Sämmtliche Werke. 31 vols.
Berlin: Reimer, 1834.

Schlette, H. R.
Die Nichtigkeit der Welt: Der Philosophische Horizont des Hugo von St. Viktor.
Müchen: Kösel-Verlag, 1961.

Schlink, Edmund
Theology of the Lutheran Confessions. Translated by P. F. Hoehneke and H. J. A. Bouman, from *Theologie der lutherische Bekenntnisschriften.*
Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961.

Schmidt, Karl T.
Rediscovering the Natural in Protestant Theology.
Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962.

Schott, Erdmann
Das Problem der Glaubensgewiszheit in Auseinandersetzung mit Karl Heim eroertet.
Greifswald: Verlag Ratsbuchhandlung L. Bamberg, 1931.

Schumann, Friedrich Karl
Der Gotteshedanke und der Zerfall der Moderne.
Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr, 1929.

Überwindung des Säkularismus in der Wissenschaft.
Gladbeck: Freizeiten Verlag, 1948.

Schweitzer, Albert
The Quest of the Historical Jesus. Translated by W. Montgomery from *Von Reimarus zu Wrede.*
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957.

Schweizer, Eduard
Lordship and Discipleship. Translated by the author from *Erniedrigung und Erhöhung bei Jesus und seinen Nachfolgern.*
Naperville, Illinois: Alec Allenson, Inc., 1960.

Sharp, D. E.
Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford in the Thirteenth Century.
London: Gregg Press Ltd., 1962.

Sittler, Joseph
The Care of the Earth and Other University Sermons.
Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964.

Smith, Ronald Gregor
The New Man: Christianity and Man's Coming of Age.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956.

Souter, Alexander (ed.)
A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D.
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949.

Spener, P. J.
Pia Desideria. Translated by Theodore Tappert.
Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964.

Stallmann, Martin
Was Ist Saekularisierung?
Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1960.

Stephan, Horst u. Schmidt, Martin
Geschichte der deutschen evangelischen Theologie seit dem deutschen Idealismus.
Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1960.

Switzlski, Bruno
Neo-Platonism and Augustine.
Washington, D. C.: Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, 1951.

Symanowski, Horst
The Christian Witness in an Industrial Society. Translated by George H. Kehm from selected chapters from *Gegen die Welffremdheit.*

Gegen die Weltfremdheit.
Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1960.

Thielicke, Helmut
Der Glaube der Christenheit.
Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958.

Das Leben kann noch einmal beginnen.
Hamburg: Quell-Verlag, 1959.

Nihilism: Its Origin and Nature - with a Christian Answer, Translated by John Doberstein from *Der Nihilismus.*
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961.

Theologische Ethik, I and II.
Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1955.

Tillich, Paul
The New Being.
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.

Thomas of Celano
St. Francis of Assisi. Translated by Placid Hermann, O.F.M.
Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1963.

Törnvall, Gustaf
Andligt och världsligt regemente hos Luther.
Lund: Ohlsson, 1940.

Torrance, T. F.
Calvin's Doctrine of Man.
London: Lutterworth Press, 1949.

Troeltsch, Ernst
Die Bedeutung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu für den Glauben.
Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1911.

Protestantism and Progress: A Historical Study of the Relation of Protestantism to the Modern World. Translated by W. Montgomery.
Boston: Beacon Press, 1912.

Van Buren, Paul
The Secular Meaning of the Gospel.
New York: The Macmillan Co., 1963.

Verweijr, Pieter Godfred
Evangelium und neues Gesetz in der Christenheit bis auf Marcion.
Utrecht: Kemink, 1960.

Vidler, Alexander
Secular Despair and Christian Faith.
London: S.C.M. Press, 1941.

Wagler, Roland
Der Ort der Ethik bei Friedrich Gogarten: Der Glaube als Ermächtigung zum rechten Unterscheiden.
Hamburg: Herbert Reich Evang. Verlag, 1963.

Wagner, Wilhelm
Der Christ und der Welt nach Clemens von Alexandrien.
Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1903.

Wallace, R. S.
Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life.
Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, Ltd., 1953.

Watson, Philip S.
The Concept of Grace.
Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959.

Weber, Max
From Max Weber. Edited and translated by H. H. Girth and C. Wright Mills.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1948.

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Translated by Talcott Parsons from *Die protestantische Ethik und den Geist des Kapitalismus.*

Weizsäcker, Carl von
The History of Nature.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959.

Welch, Claude (ed.)
God and Incarnation in Mid-Nineteenth Century German Theology.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Wencelius, Léon
L'Esthétique de Calvin.
Paris: Societe d'edition "Les Belles Lettres," 1937.

White, A. D.
A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology.
New York: Appleton, 1909.

Wildenhaln, Karl A.
Philip Jacob Spener.
Philadelphia: J. F. Smith, 1881.

Wilmore, Gayraud S.
The Secular Relevance of the Church.
Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962.

Wingren, Gustaf
Creation and Law. Translated by Ross Mackenzie from *Skapelsen och lagen.*
Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961.

Winter, Gibson
The New Creation as Metropolis.
New York: Macmillan and Co., 1963.

Wünsch, Georg
Theologische Ethik.
Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1925.

Articles

Anderson, Bernard W.
"The Earth is the Lord's."
Interpretation, IX (1955), 5-18.

Barbour, Ian
"Karl Heim on Christian Faith and Natural Science."
Christian Scholar, XXXIX, No. 3 (September 1956), 229-237.

Bethge, Eberhard
"The Challenge of Dietrich Bonhoeffer."
The Chicago Seminary Register, Vol. LI, 2 (February 1961), 1-38.

"The Editing and Publishing of the Bonhoeffer Papers."
The Andover Newton Bulletin, LII, No. 2 (December 1959), 1-9.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich
"Zu Karl Heims *Glaube und Denken.*"
Christentum und Wissenschaft, VIII, No. 12 (1932). Reprinted in Bonhoeffer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, III, 138-159.

"Concerning the Christian Idea of God."
The Journal of Religion, XII, No. 2 (April 1932), 177-185.

"God in an Irreligious World."
The Ecumenical Review, IV, No. 2 (January 1952), 131-138.

Bring, Ragnar
"The Gospel of the New Creation."
Dialog, 3 (Autumn 1964), 274-282.

Brunner, Emil
"The New Barth."
Scottish Journal of Theology, II, No. 3 (1951), 124ff.

Dantine, Wilhelm
"The Revelation of Man."
The Student World, No. 1 (1963), 22-30.

Dingle, Robert
"Review of Two Works by Karl Heim."
British Journal of Philosophy and Science, IX, No. 2 (September 1956) 202-222.

von Dobschütz, Ernst
"Zeit und Raum im Denken des Urchristentums."
Journal of Biblical Literature, XLI (1922), 212-223.

Dooyeweerd, Herman
"La sécularisation de la science."
La Revue Reformée, V (1954), 138-157.

Ebeling, Gerhard
"Die 'nicht'religiöse Interpretation biblischer Begriffe."
Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, 52 (1955), 296-360.

Godsey, John
"Barth and Bonhoeffer."
The Drew Gateway, XXXIII (1962), 3-20.

Gogarten, Friedrich
"Die Krisis unserer Kultur."
Christliche Welt, 34, No. 49 (1920), 770-777.

"Theologie und Geschichte."
Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, 50/3 (1953), 339-394.

"Wider die romantische Theologie."
Christliche Welt, 36, No. 27 (1922), 514-519)

"Wort Gottes und Schrift."
Deutsche Theologie, Heft 7/8 (1936), 198ff.

"The Unity of History."
Theology Today, XV, No. 2 (July 1958), 198-210.

"Zwischen den Zeiten."
Christliche Welt, 34, No. 24 (1920), 374-378.

Gualtieri, Antonio R.
"Time, Eternity and Contemporaneity with Christ."
Scottish Journal of Theology, XVII, No. 4 (1964), 396-405.

Hamilton, William
"A Secular Theology for a World Come of Age."
Theology Today, XVIII, No. 4 (January 1962), 436-465.

Hill George G.
"Bonhoeffer, Bridge Between Liberalism and Orthodoxy."
The New Christian Advocate (June 1957), 80-83.

Joest, Wilfried
"Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit: Kritische Gedanken zu Friedrich Gogartens Buch."
Kerygma und Dogma, I (1958), 36ff.

Johnson, Robert Clyde
"A Theologian of Synthesis."
Theology Today, XV, No. 1 (1958), 36ff.

Koeberle, Adolf
"Theologie der Kontakte: Gedenkrede für Professor D. Dr. Karl Heim, D.D."
Theologische Literaturzeitung, No. 2 (February 1959), 149-151.

Lampe, G. W. H.
"The New Testament Doctrine of KTISIS."
Scottish Journal of Theology, XVII, No. 4 (1964), 449-462.

Langford, Thomas A.
"Secular Realm/Secularism: An Important Difference."
Christian Advocate, VII, No. 8 (April 11, 1963), 7-8.

Logan, James C.
"Helmut Thielicke: Preacher in a Nihilistic Age."
Nexus, VI, No. 3 (May 1963), 21-25.

"Martin Buber: A Voice Outside the Camp."
Christian Advocate (September 1965), 9-11.

Lorenz, Heinz
"Die christliche Hoffnung und ihre Säkularisierung."
Evangelische Theologie, Heft 3 (Marz 1963), 131-142.

McNeill, J. T.
"Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers."
Journal of Religion, XXVI (1946), 168-182.

Markus, R. A.
"A Relevant Pattern of Holiness."
The Hibbert Journal, LV, No. 219 (July 1957), 387f.

Michalson, Carl
"The Task of Apologetics in the Future (Karl Heim's Theology after Fifty Years)."
Scottish Journal of Theology, 6 (1953), 362-378.

Mueller-Gangloff, E.
"Theologie für die mündige Welt - Dietrich Bonhoeffer and die geistgeschichtliche Situation der Gegenwart."
Die neue Furche, Heft 8 (August 1952), 525-530.

Nygren, Anders
"Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms."
The Ecumenical Review, I, No. 3 (1949), 301-310.

Prenter, R.
"Das Evangelium der Säkularisierung: Bemerkungen zu F. Gogartens letzten Werken."
Theologische Zeitschrift, Heft 6 (November-December 1956), 605-630.

Scheffczk, L.
"Der Sonnengesang des hl. Franziskus von Assisi und die *Hymne an die Materiel* Teilhard de Chardin. Ein Vergleich zur Deutung der *Struktur* christlicher Schöpfungsfrömmigkeit."
Geist und Leben, Heft 35 (1962), 219-233.

Schlick, L.
"Zur Theologie Karl Heims."
Zwischen den Zeiten (1929), 461-483.

Sherman, Franklin
"God as Creative Artist."
Dialog, 3 (Autumn 1964), 283-287.

Shiner, Larry E.
"Secular Man."
Motive, XXII, No. 8 (May 1962), 16-18.

Sittler, Joseph
"A Theology for Earth."
The Christian Scholar, XXXVII (1954), 367-374.

Smith, Ronald Gregor
"A Theological Perspective of the Secular."
The Christian Scholar, XLIII, 1 (March 1960), 11-24.

Stolz, A.
"Zur Theologie Anselms im Proslogion."
Catholica, 2 (1933), 1-21.

Thielicke, Helmut
"Das Ende der Religion, Ueberlegungen zur Theologie Dietrich Bonhoeffers."
Theologische Literaturzeitung, 81 (1956), 307-326.

"Studie zum Atheismus-Problem."
Zeitschrift für evangelische Ethik (1960 May), 129-136.

Troeltsch, Ernst
"Ein Apfel vom Baume Kierkegaards."
Christliche Welt, 35, No. 11 (1921), 186-189.

Van Buren, Paul M.
"The Secular Meaning of the Gospel."
Episcopal Theological School Journal, XVII, No. 3 (Easter 1962), 14-23.

Wedel, Theodore O.
"Man Come of Age."
Union Seminary Quarterly Review, XVIII, No. 3-Part II (March 1963), 326-340.

Wendland, Heinz-Dietrich
"Review of Heim's Die christliche Ethik."
Theologische Literaturzeitung, No. 5 (Mai 1957), 379-380.

Westermann, Claus
"God and His Creation."
Union Seminary Quarterly Review, XVIII, No. 3 (March 1963), 197-210.

Whittemore, Robert C.
"Karl Heim: Panentheism and the Space of God."
Concordia Theological Monthly, XXX, No. 11 (November 1959), 824-837.

THE SECULAR AS A THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM: A STUDY IN THE THEOLOGIES OF KARL HEIM, DIETRICH BONHOEFFER AND FRIEDRICH GOGARTEN

(Publication No. Mic.)

James Cecil Logan, Ph.D.

Boston University Graduate School, 1966

Major Professor: Dr. Nils Ehrenstrom

The selected theologians of this study have given concentrated attention to the modern phenomenon of secularization. In order to show lines of continuity with certain classical theological problems and to distinguish the uniqueness of the contemporary theological approach to secularization a historical survey of the theological understanding of the "world" in the pre-Constantinian, Constantinian and Reformation periods precedes the expository chapters.

A critical norm for the historical survey and the expository chapters is developed through a biblical word study of AION, KTISIS and KOSMOS. The essentially temporal meaning of these terms points to the suitability of a Heilsplan as a normative structure for reckoning with the "secular" as a theological category.

Heim's apologetic approach consisted first in analyzing the structure of the secularistic *Weltanschauung* which had been erected on the basis of Newtonian physics. With the advent of new discoveries in physics and with the positing of nonobjectifiable relations in contemporary existential interpersonal philosophy, Heim saw the possibility of a new *Weltanschauung* which could replace the older secularistic *Weltanschauung*. The crisis of secularism demanded a new

Weltanschauung which would render conceivable divine transcendence. Heim's effort was directed exclusively toward constructing such a Weltanschauung.

Rather than displacing an older Weltanschauung which Heim had identified with secularism, Bonhoeffer welcomed the maturity of the secular world and predicated this maturity on the basis of a Kondeszens-Christology. In order to avoid antithetical categorizing of the sacred and the secular, Bonhoeffer held that the world and God were related in a dialectical unity the reality of which was the concrete Word in Jesus Christ. On this basis Bonhoeffer gave positive assessment to the "religionless" man and called for a "nonreligious interpretation" as the proper theological method for a "world come of age."

Gogarten attempts a theological justification of secularization within the framework of an existential-historical understanding of the Christian faith. Secularization is to be understood as the legitimate consequence of the divine gift of "sonship." In this relationship with God man is set free from a sacralized world and is called to a new responsibility for the world, i.e., creation, before God. Secularization is the process whereby the world becomes nothing other than the world. On these grounds Gogarten makes a fundamental distinction between "secularism" as man's mistaken sacralizing of the world and "secularization" as man's understanding of his freedom from and responsibility for the world.

Heim correctly understood that transcendence was a critical issue in answering the threat of secularism, but his haste in constructing a new Weltanschauung obscured possible positive contributions of secularization. Bonhoeffer's Christological basis for the reality of the saeculum offers a positive evaluation of the "secular," but it is questionable that the particular Christology of condescension is wholly adequate for the task. Gogarten has offered a convincing argument for the process of secularization within the context of the Christian faith, but the existential-historical form of his theology ignores the category of nature and tends to bifurcate faith and works to the extent that no ethical content can be ascribed to faith.

A Heilsplan schema with its central focus on the Lordship of Christ over the world offers the most adequate possibility for interpreting creation, the church and the consummation as the means whereby God "secularizes" himself in order to render a proper secularization of the world. This schema views secularization (in contrast to secularism) as a part of the activity of God in the world, and viewing this process within the temporal line from creation to consummation avoids any tendency to make absolute any stage of the process.

James Cecil Logan, son of Leona Helton and Robert Lynch Logan, was born in Washington County, Virginia, June 23, 1932. He received his early education in the public schools of Virginia and was graduated from Pulaski High School, Pulaski, Virginia, in 1950. His A.B. degree was earned in 1953 from Florida Southern College, Lakeland, Florida, and his S.T.B. degree in 1956 from Boston University School of Theology. From 1956 to 1959 he served as associate pastor of the Hyde Park Community Methodist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1959 he began his graduate studies leading to the Ph.D.. degree at Boston University Graduate School. During the years 1960 and 1961 he studied at St. Mary's College, University of St. Andrews, Scotland, and the University of Basel, Switzerland. He has served on the staffs of the Union Congregational Church, Weymouth, Massachusetts; the Federated Church, Ayer, Massachusetts; and the Pilgrim Congregational Church, Leominster, Massachusetts. In 1964 he became Assistant Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Emory and Henry College, Emory, Virginia. The following year he assumed the pastorate of the college church and continued to serve in the department of religion and philosophy of Emory and Henry College. In September 1966 he will become Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington D. C.